

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO

Inked in English

The function of English in tattoos as a way
of expressing identity in Finland

Karra Väisänen
Pro gradu -tutkielma
Englannin kielen ja kirjallisuuden maisteriohjelma
Nykykielten laitos
Helsingin yliopisto
Huhtikuu 2019

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Tiedekunta/Osasto – Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta | | Laitos – Institution – Department Nykykielten laitos | |
| Tekijä – Författare – Author Karra Väisänen | | | |
| Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title Inked In English – The function of English in tattoos as a way of expressing identity in Finland | | | |
| Oppiaine – Läroämne – Subject Englantilainen filologia | | | |
| Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level Pro gradu - tutkielma | Aika – Datum – Month and year 03/2019 | Sivumäärä– Sidoantal – Number of pages 48 | |
| Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract | | | |
| <p>Tutkielma tarkastelee englanninkielisiä tatuointeja Suomessa ja sitä, kuinka suomalaiset ilmaisevat identiteettejään niiden kautta. Tämä tutkielma tuo tatuointien tarkasteluun mukaan aivan uuden, lingvistisen, aspektin. Tatuointeja on tutkittu aiemmin paljon varsinkin psykologian ja kulttuurintutkimuksen näkökulmasta. Nämä tutkimukset ovat usein perustuneet tatuoitujen henkilöiden haastatteluihin ja niissä on narratiivisista aineistoista selvitetty tatuointien ottamisen syitä. Tutkijat ovat huomanneet, että tatuoinneilla on suuri merkitys identiteetin ilmaisemisessa ja minäkuvan luomisessa.</p> <p>Kyselyyn osallistui 136 vastaajaa. Kysely toteutettiin kyselylomakkeen avulla internetissä, ja siihen oli mahdollista vastata joko suomeksi tai englanniksi. Osallistujiksi haettiin Suomessa asuvia henkilöitä, joilla oli englannin kieltä tatuoituna ihoonsa. Ikäjakauksa oli suuri, 19-55 vuotta, ja 82 % kyselyyn vastanneista oli naisia ja 18 % miehiä. Melkein kaikki osallistujat mainitsivat äidinkielen suomen (3 % kertoi puhuvansa ruotsia äidinkielenään).</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa havaittiin, että englantia käytettiin tatuoinneissa ilmaisemaan erilaisia identiteettejä: riippuen englannin kielen tärkeydestä vastaajan elämässä englanninkielisen tatuoinnin nähtiin muuttavan identiteettejä sekä positiivisesti että negatiivisesti. Erityisesti yksilöille, jotka eivät pitäneet englantia henkilökohtaisesti tärkeänä, englannin kielellä oli tatuoinnissa vain esteettinen funktio. Yleisimmät syyt tatuoinnin ottamiselle vahvistivat aikaisempien tutkimusten tuloksia: tatuointeja otettiin niiden voimaannuttavan vaikutuksen vuoksi, ikuistamaan jokin vaihe yksilön elämässä ja ilmaisemaan sidettä ystävään, kaveriin tai lemmikkiin. Englanti valittiin tatuoinnin kieleksi, koska sen koettiin olevan jollain tapaa ”parempi” ja kauniimpi kuin suomi ja koska tatuoinnin lähteen (esim. sitaatti, laulun sanat) alkuperäinen kieli haluttiin säilyttää. Lisäksi havaittiin, että yksittäisten tatuointien merkitys oli pienempi enemmän tatuoiduille henkilöille kuin henkilöille, joilla oli vähemmän tatuointeja. Käsivarret ja jalat olivat useimmin tatuoidut paikat sekä miehillä että naisilla.</p> <p>Osallistujien ikä ja englannin kielen tärkeys vaikuttivat merkittävästi heidän vastauksiinsa: englantia ja heidän englanninkieliset tatuointinsa olivat huomattavasti tärkeämpiä nuoremmille henkilöille. Vastaajien sukupuolella ja koulutustasolla ei havaittu olevan suurempaa vaikutusta vastauksiin.</p> <p>Tutkimus osoittaa, että huolimatta stigmasta, joka tatuoituihin henkilöihin liitetään, tatuoinneilla on huomattavan suuri vaikutus yksilön identiteetille – joillekin tatuointien merkitykset ovat todella henkilökohtaisia, toisille taas on erittäin tärkeää, mitä muut ajattelevat heidän tatuoinneistaan.</p> | | | |
| Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords Tattoos, identity, English in Finland, linguistic landscape, skinscape | | | |
| Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited Keskustakampanuksen kirjasto | | | |
| Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information | | | |

Table of contents

| | | |
|---------|---|----|
| 1 | Introduction..... | 1 |
| 2 | Theoretical background | 3 |
| 2.1 | The brief history of tattoo art..... | 3 |
| 2.1.1 | Ancient traditions | 3 |
| 2.1.2 | From curiosity to taboo | 4 |
| 2.1.3 | Tattoo renaissance | 5 |
| 2.2 | Tattoos and identity | 5 |
| 2.3 | English in Finland | 12 |
| 2.4 | Summary of previous studies | 14 |
| 3 | Data and methodology | 15 |
| 3.1 | Distribution..... | 16 |
| 3.2 | Online questionnaire..... | 17 |
| 3.3 | Problematic aspects and feedback | 20 |
| 4 | Results..... | 22 |
| 4.1 | The expressions of different identities | 22 |
| 4.1.1 | The respondents' attitudes toward English | 23 |
| 4.1.2 | Different identities | 24 |
| 4.1.2.1 | English not at all important..... | 26 |
| 4.1.2.2 | English not very important | 27 |
| 4.1.2.3 | English somewhat important | 28 |
| 4.1.2.4 | English very important..... | 29 |
| 4.2 | Characteristics of English language tattoos..... | 32 |
| 4.2.1 | Reasons for getting the English language tattoo | 33 |
| 4.2.2 | Justifications for the English language in the tattoo | 36 |
| 4.2.3 | Location of the tattoo | 40 |

| | | |
|---|--|----|
| 5 | Discussion..... | 42 |
| 6 | Conclusion | 47 |
| | Bibliography..... | 49 |
| | Appendix A - Questionnaire | 52 |
| | Appendix B – The list of the tattoos | 57 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1: Age distribution..... | 19 |
| Figure 2: Background information | 19 |
| Figure 3: English usage in one's everyday life | 23 |
| Figure 4: Descriptions of English skills | 24 |
| Figure 5: Reasons for getting the English language tattoo | 33 |
| Figure 6: Justifications for the English language in the tattoo | 36 |
| Figure 7: Location of the English language tattoo..... | 40 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1: Data based on the importance of English | 26 |
|--|----|

1 Introduction

While human body can be adorned with temporary ornaments such as clothing and make-up, an increasing number of people choose something of a more permanent nature – tattoos. Colopelnic (2011: 81) defines ‘tattoo’ as “a permanent mark on the skin obtained by the insertion of a pigment of different colors with the help of a pointy instrument (today, an electric tattoo machine).”

To this day, tattooing as a practice has undergone many significant changes during its long history. From the Stone Age (Gilbert 2000) to Ancient Egypt and Greece (Goffmann 2009) to Holy Roman Empire (Lane 2014); from pre-Edo Japan to barbaric China (Buss & Hodges 2017); and all the way from indigenous tribes to the colonizing West (Goldstein 2007; Atkinson 2003; DeMello 2000). Through the vast geographic transitions, the functions of tattoos have not remained the same, either. Tattoos have been used as decorations and ornaments (Gilbert 2000); as rites of passage (Atkinson 2003); to denote group membership (DeMello 2000; Lane 2014); and to mark outsiders, such as prisoners and criminals (Goffmann 2009; Buss & Hodges 2017; Atkinson 2003; DeMello 2000). Nowadays, however, tattoos have become a commodity (Lane 2014: 405), which often tell a story and are regarded as subjective expressions of identity (Colopelnic 2011: 82). Bell (1999: 57) alleges that because identities are constantly evolving, tattoos and identities can prove fruitful for further research.

Lane (2014: 405) argues that existing research on tattoos indicates that we know a lot about the tattooing process itself, the socioeconomic function of tattoos, and how tattoos are understood in communities and groups. Moreover, previous research has focused especially on the outcome of the tattoo process. However, Lane claims that scholars still know very little about the significance of tattoos. Why do people spend huge amounts of money and undergo painful procedures to have something inked on their skins? Kosut (2000: 98) states that tattoos are “a cross-cultural, historical and contemporary phenomenon”, which are filled with both personal and cultural meanings. They are visual, aesthetic symbols that can be interpreted in many ways.

This study takes research on tattoos into a completely uncharted area: linguistics. Drawing from identity theory by States and Burke (2000), this paper aims to discover

what functions English language has in text tattoos taken by Finnish people, and how do Finns express their identities through these tattoos. What is more, the thesis forms an English *skinscape* in Finland by asking, for example, what kind of English is used in tattoos and why, and where are the tattoos located? Thus, my research questions are:

1. How is English utilized in the tattoos to express identity in Finland?
2. What are the characteristics of English language tattoos in Finland?

English has been taken up and utilized in Finland for many different functions (Leppänen et al. 2011: 24), yet Finns do not see English as a threat to their national languages (ibid.: 159). Leppänen et al. (ibid.: 161) found that despite the fact that English is increasing in Finland's linguistic landscape its uses are limited to specific contexts, such as forums, international business companies, and gaming to name a few instances. As tattoos have not been researched in a linguistic landscape before, it will be interesting to find out how exactly is English exploited in Finnish skinscape.

In the next section, I will first present the brief history of tattoo art (2.1) to clarify how tattooing has changed over the centuries. Then, I will discuss previous research on tattoos and identity construction (2.2), and the use of English (2.3) in Finland. In the methodologies section, I will explain my data collection process and construe how the data were subsequently be analyzed. Analysis of the data will then be presented in section 4 followed with the discussion of the results (section 5). In the conclusion (section 6), the research will be summarized.

2 Theoretical background

In this section, I will start by briefly overviewing the existing literature of the history of tattoo art, because it is important to look back in time to understand contemporary tattooing practices. According to Atkinson (2003: 29), history works as a gateway. He argues that “contemporary interpretations of tattoos (...) derive from historical uses and understandings of tattooing” (ibid.: 24), which is why a look at the history of tattooing is justifiable. The subsection 2.1 will be further chronologically divided into three more exact periods of tattooing: ancient traditions, from curiosity to taboo, and tattoo renaissance (Rubin 1988b, as cited in Lane 2014: 402). Recent research on the relationship between tattoos and identity reconstruction will be covered in the section 2.2, the subsection 2.3 will provide insight of the role of English in Finnish society, and how these different sections coincide will be overviewed in 2.4.

2.1 The brief history of tattoo art

Despite its unprecedented fame and prestige today, tattooing is by no means a recent fad or novelty. It has been practiced by humans in some form almost everywhere in the world already since the Stone Age (Gilbert 2000: 7). The English noun ‘tattoo’ used to mean a signal which was played either with a drum or a bugle to call military men to quarters. The recent meaning of the word, ‘to mark the skin with pigments’, however, derives from the late 18th century when Captain Cook defined the Tahitian and Marquesan sounds *tatau* and *tatu* respectively as such in his journal (Goldstein 2007: 417).

2.1.1 Ancient traditions

Tattoo practices were fully integrated in social settings already thousands of years ago (Buss & Hodges 2017: 5). Rubin (1988, as cited in Buss & Hodges 2017: 5) argues that there is archeological evidence which shows that tattoos may have been exclusive to women in ancient Egypt. These women who worked with music and dance probably wore tattoos as conspicuous ornaments.

In the ancient Greece, primitive tattooing techniques were used in a completely different manner – to denote criminals and wrongdoers. These lifelong marks were referred to as ‘stigma’ by the Greeks (Goffman 2009: 1). The means of labelling

deviant identity was also used in Holy Roman Empire (Lane 2014: 403) and in Japan during the pre-Edo period (DeMello 2000: 75). In Japan, however, “criminals manipulated their punitive tattoos by covering the original tattoo with a more elaborate and artistic design”, which eventually led the government to abandon the habit of tattooing criminals (Lane 2014: 404). Buss & Hodges (2017: 11) state that even to this day, tattoos are regarded as taboo in Japan leading tattoo artists to battle legal fights to hold on to the right to pursue their craft.

In a tribal context, tattoos had a distinctively profound societal and spiritual meaning. As a child, before being marked with a tattoo, people were seen to be in their natural status. Getting a tattoo signified entry to an adult’s world – to fully become human (Buss & Hodges 2017: 7-8). Thus, in many tribes tattooing was seen as a rite of passage, to become a man (Atkinson 2003: 52).

2.1.2 From curiosity to taboo

Tattoos were introduced to the Western civilization in the Age of Exploration, from the 15th century onwards. Merchants and travelers returned home from Pacific, Asia, and Africa with the stories of body modification. Captain Cook and his men were among the first Europeans to get Polynesian tattoos themselves, from which the tradition of sailors with tattoos can be said to have originated. (Rubin 1988, as cited in Buss & Hodges 2017: 15).

As the sailors returned home with their tattooed bodies, European middle and upper classes were bolstered by their cultural understanding and refined civilization (Atkinson 2003: 31). In the 1770s, Europeans started exporting the tattooed savages, who were seen as exotic but vulgar, as evidence of primitivism (DeMello 2000: 46).

Following these voyages, according to Atkinson (2003: 32), especially Maoris in the New Zealand were hunted because of their visible facial markings, *ta moko*.

Tattooing was seen as a painful and profane ritual of a foreign origin by the elite Europeans, and the interaction with the aboriginal people stirred an interest among the British royal society as well. The stir did not last for long, however, as the invention of the electronic tattoo pen in 1891 eventually caused tattooing to lose its elite status as tattoos were then less expensive and easier to do (ibid.: 34).

Moreover, tattoos started to stealthily and slowly make their way into North American and European cultures. From 1880s to 1920s tattooed savages were used as an attraction in carnivals and circuses, which proceeded to bring about a demand for professional tattoo artists. Circus workers gained money with their attractive tattoos, and with that money they employed the tattoo artists. (Atkinson 2003: 35).

Tattooing took a backstep in the period following the Second World War. Atkinson (2003: 38-39) states that “prisoners and other social deviants who involuntarily received tattoos eventually pursued lines of collective resistance to such pejorative labelling.” Tattoos now served as a visible language of rebellion and disrepute. In the 1950s and 1960s they became the most prominent in prisons among the gang members and motorcyclists. Pictures such as skulls, gang names and roses became the feared motifs (Atkinson 2003: 39-40).

2.1.3 Tattoo renaissance

Tattoos were seen as masculine symbols (e.g. sexy women, military insignias, gang names) until “the countercultural movements of feminism, gay liberation, and punk rock vaulted tattooing into another sphere” (Buss & Hodges 2017: 18). Starting approximately in the 1970s, a group of artists began creating a new medium for tattooing. As people from the middle class became more and more involved with the practice, it started evolving and expanding beyond its disreputable past (DeMello 2000: 79). Along with the aforementioned movements, tattoo communities created its own jargon and lexicon, and words such as ‘body suit’, ‘sleeve’, and ‘jailhouse’ entered the scene (Provenzo 2011: 44).

Lane (2014: 404) states that the tattooing practice has recently changed from folk art to an occupation. Nevertheless, tattooing being as popular as ever especially in the Western culture, negativity is ever more present. According to Pitts (2003: 88), tattoos are still being regarded as merely decorative or a temporary fad, and there exists a tendency to pathologize tattooing as masochistic behavior.

2.2 Tattoos and identity

Tattoos are frequently associated with different ideologies, and more importantly, identity markers, as following studies in this section will actualize. However, to be

able to define ‘identity’, a brief look at the paper by Stets and Burke (2000) is needed. They compared social identity theory with identity theory and combined the two to “provide a uniform approach to the multifaceted nature of identities in terms of their bases, their processes, and their outcomes” (ibid.: 1). In their study of the identity theories, they distinguished three main concepts: ‘self-categorization’, ‘identity’, and ‘self-concept’. In self-categorization, one cognitively and reflexively looks back on oneself and contrasts self with other socially classified categories (ibid.: 233). From this process emerge self-views in relation to social groups or specific roles, which in turn contain one’s identities (ibid.: 233). Each individual thus has a number of different identities and self-categorizations, both of which as a set constitute the self-concept (ibid.: 234). In other words, the self-concept comprises all of the different identities of an individual. Moreover, Stets and Burke argue that “different identities become active as the situation changes and relevant self-categorization stimuli change” (ibid.:236). In the current study, the focus will be on discussing the role of English in expressing identities, which emerge from Finns’ self-concepts.

Lane (2014: 398) categorizes the existing research on tattooing under four larger themes: group behavior, art or cultural production, tattooed individuals, and commodification of culture. Provenzo (2011: 44) adds that tattoos also harbor a sense of defiance and ideological stances. The interdisciplinary research is continuously expanding and the literature on the subject of tattooing is now situated in several fields such as paleoforesics, medicine, gender studies, art, history, psychology, anthropology and sociology, but quite interestingly not linguistics, on which this study will be placed on. Lane (2014: 398) argues that “with few exceptions, the emphasis in the majority of accumulated literature has been on the consumers of tattoos rather than the producers”. The focus in this section, however, will be on the studies regarding individuals’ tattoos as markers of identity, and body as a resource for identity construction.

According to Harris poll by Braverman (2012), at least every fifth American adult now has a tattoo. She reported that 38% of the respondents aged 30-39, 30% of those aged 25-29, and 22% of those aged 18-24 had tattoos. Taking the growing tattooing trend into account, the amount of people with tattoos has probably gone up

drastically since the poll was conducted. The results show that despite the tattoo renaissance, older people (11% of 50-64 and 5% of 65 and older had tattoos) are yet to immerse themselves with tattooing.

The results of the Harris poll can be somewhat misleading, however. First, 2,016 adults took part in the concerned survey by Braverman (2012), which is not by any means generalizable to all of the Americans. Secondly, using the Harris poll website as a way to gather data raises a few questions regarding the validity and reliability of the study: the website attracts people to participate in studies by offering reward points for every single completed survey, which can then be exchanged for money and gift cards. Moreover, in order to be able to take part in any of the studies, one is required to insert their credit card credentials on the site. This ulterior motive raises even more questions about the veracity of the respondents' answers, which will not be dwelled into any further in this research.

Studies have found out that women are having more tattoos than men in general (Armstrong 1991; DeMello 2000; Atkinson 2003; Dickson 2015). However, it should be kept in mind that the studies in question were conducted mainly in North America and the situation may not be exactly the same in Europe. The tattooed individuals are also more likely to have tattooed friends and family members (Dickson 2015). The most common locations for tattoos vary between men and women (Atkinson 2003; Bell 1999; Fisher 2002; Tiggemann & Golder 2006): arms are the standard for men, and the middle of the lower back for women, "mainly for concealment purposes" (Atkinson 2003: 203-4). Fisher (2002: 100) disagrees with Atkinson and states that women choose tattoo locations based on how easily they can be concealed, whereas men like to show off their tattoos more eagerly.

In his comprehensive research based on semi-structured interviews, Atkinson (2003: 158) gathered that tattoos work as bonds between mutually identified individuals. Those who belonged to some group (e.g. sports team, gang, close friends, community etc.) were bound to have tattoos to signify their commitment and express group membership. Those enthusiasts who described their involvement into tattooing by 'coolness' were mostly individuals with no specific group membership ties. Based on his interviews, Atkinson (ibid.: 186) came up with three normative justifications for tattoos, which can have important effects on identity: role transitions (i.e. changes in

life construct meanings behind one's tattoos), affect management (i.e. overcoming emotions of pain, trauma, sorrow, and loss; and ritual cleansing by the physical pain), and individual difference (i.e. commemoration, status passage). He deduced that "by justifying the practice [tattooing] with personally significant motivations, enthusiasts often portray their body projects as deeply meaningful cultural expressions" (ibid.: 207). Interestingly, however, the majority of tattooed individuals often feared negative reactions from others.

Firmin et al. (2012) studied the tattoo acquisition of college students and categorized the decisions affecting tattooing in two categories. According to them, acquiring a tattoo is affected by both internal and external factors. The former category includes intrinsic values such as symbolism, reminders, and memorials, and the latter encompasses considerations of health issues, influence of parents and peers, and social stigma attached to tattoos. Buss & Hodges (2017), following the similar claim made by Armstrong (1991: 11) almost thirty years ago, argue that tattoos still connote pictures of criminals, prostitutes and sailors, and that despite the expanding field of tattooing, the old stigma is still present in the world today.

Akin to Firmin et al. (2012), Dickson (2015) researched the meanings of tattoos for college students. He states that college students are prolific targets for studying tattoos, because due to their ampler socioeconomic standing and possibly more formidable future occupations they tend to be different from the stereotypical tattooed working-class workers. He adds that "for many young adults, college is the first opportunity to express oneself with a tattoo, since many of them are on their own for the first time" (ibid.:107). Dickson found that the time people spend thinking about getting a tattoo is less for those who get their first tattoo under the age of 18. This might affect the findings as he suggests that "tattooing (...) is a part of the still-emerging mainstream of young adult culture, as a large number of respondents, 43.1%, have at least one tattoo." (ibid.: 118) However, tattoos are not something to be taken lightly, as Dickson points out that respondents are ready to spend huge amounts of money to have something permanent and sizeable on their skins. The main reason for getting a tattoo was distinguishing oneself from the others: individuals acquired tattoos that were "aesthetically unique", "inspirational", and allowed for "spontaneous self-expression" (ibid.: 118). He alleges that the results

clearly imply that individuals use tattoos to express identity. Horne (2007: 1) reported similar findings among college students as Dickson and further distinguished the impact of gender for tattoos: women had tattoos for personal body decoration reasons, and for men tattoos signified group identity (e.g. Marines).

In addition to focusing on the tattooed individuals, Dickson (2015) also surveyed the opinions of the non-tattooed. Despite the growing trend, most of the respondents of his study did not have tattoos and half of them had no plans to ever get one. The results for not getting a tattoo were in consensus with the category of external factors mentioned by Firmin et al. (2012). Other reasons for not getting a tattoo included their permanency, and lack of money or time. Some respondents mentioned the fear of pain and needles which abstained them from never getting tattooed.

Tiggemann and Golder (2006) discussed in their study that people who have tattoos have a higher need for uniqueness. They allege that the practice of tattooing usually ensues positive psychological results for the individual, which are important to one's concept of self and uniqueness (ibid.: 310). Since tattooing requires time, money, and enduring pain, they deduced that one's uniqueness is expressed in what they call appearance domain. To support their claim, the results of their study indicated that the most common reasons to get tattooed were to express oneself, and because tattoos "look good" (ibid.: 314). They conclude that those who have tattoos declared "greater need for uniqueness than their non-tattooed counterparts. This is consistent with the notion that tattooing provides a means for differentiating oneself from everyone else" (ibid.: 314).

Tiggemann and Golder's (2006) results differ from Dickson's (2015) a bit. Regardless of slightly differing foci and frameworks of their studies, while Tiggemann and Golder emphasized that people have tattoos because of their aesthetic functions, Dickson's results imply that the main reason to get a tattoo is for making a personal expression or statement. Having subjectively inspirational tattoos remind oneself of something personally important, thus construing one's own identity.

In her contemplative writing, Bell (1999: 54) sees tattoos as "a physical, visual resistance to the virtual (impermanent) and conservative world that we are now

living in.” She compares tattooing to hairstyles and clothes as a cognizant choice of personal discernible identity, but there exists a dichotomy between tattoos and other forms of decoration. For example, one can change their mind when it comes to wearing clothes and thus “recreate their identity” (ibid.: 57), whereas tattoos do not work in such a way. She presents an intriguing thought in her paper stating that the literal meaning of each tattoo decreases as one becomes more heavily tattooed: “the need for each tattoo image to be an exacting identifier lessens as you become more comfortable with yourself and your tattoos” (ibid.: 57). She continues her speculation of heavily tattooed people by arguing that when one is continuously ‘under the needle’, identities evolve along with the collection of tattoos, and the meaning shifts from the tattoos to the act of being tattooed. Despite Bell representing a plethora of explicit thoughts, they do not have any firm empirical background. The essay is a subjective view on how tattooing might construct identity with only a few references.

Fisher (2002: 104) views tattoos as “a symptom of the complex relationship between the physical and social body”. In her writing, she excludes involuntary tattoos which were used to mark deviant behavior, as already discussed above, and argues that voluntary tattoos are cultural appropriation, which the individual utilizes to maintain reign over their body. She sees tattoos as irreversible identity markers which symbolize the boundaries of one’s body. Arguing against the prevalent opinion on tattoos and identity, she alleges that identity of an individual cannot be changed but is rather fixed for the lifetime (ibid.: 103). Another bold and controversial claim she makes is that “although clients are usually sober when they seek tattoos, getting tattooed is often not a deliberated decision” (ibid.: 100). Dickson’s (2015) research on college students, for example, significantly indicates otherwise.

Colopelnic (2011) sees body as a resource for identity formation. The body image is formed subjectively and is dependable on the cultural, social, and relational contexts. She argues how the meaning of body has shifted from a natural fact to something that is constantly changing and which “has a history” (ibid.: 82). She bases her philosophical contemplation on what Atkinson (2003: 27) describes as ‘body projects’ or acts of human interchange. According to Atkinson’s definition, tattooing is categorized under ‘redesigning body projects’, which “literally reconstruct the body in lasting ways” (ibid.: 26). He argues that these body projects possess the

deepest and the most profound meaning on the self. Drawing on this, Colopelnic (2011: 90) claims that tattoos are a way of telling a story of the self. She suggests that tattooed bodies have a double dimension, a narrative as an observable image, and a narrative of telling about the tattoo to others: ““to wear a tattoo” means to give it a meaning” (ibid.: 95). The meaning can also be denied from the others, as not everyone wants visual symbols of their identity to be read by others.

In the same vein, Kosut (2000: 80) sees the tattooed body as “an unfinished corporeal and social phenomenon”, which alters depending on one’s social interactions. These interactions can be interfered by what he calls bodily “sign vehicles” (ibid.: 82), which are ethnicity, social status, occupation, gender, and visible tattoos, as they are perceived by, and responded to either negatively or positively by others. In his study, Kosut (ibid.: 90) found that the meanings of tattoos derive from the wearer’s self-identity. Tattoos are ultimately regarded as more than just a way to decorate one’s body – they are *inscribed* into one’s body. He concludes that “at the most basic level of analysis people recognize their tattoos as a way to enhance, reclaim and redefine the body” (ibid.: 99).

Peck and Stroud (2015: 134) perceive body as “a corporeal linguistic landscape, or skinscape, a collection of inscriptions in place.” They draw the definition from the research on linguistic landscapes¹ by Shohamy et al. (2009: 1). Kelly-Holmes (2014: 85) adds that the research on LL is important as particular society’s prevalent languages can reveal different ideologies through the visibility and visual positioning. As the early focus of LL was mainly on signs and advertisements, also graffiti have been now added on the expanding list of LL foci, so why not tattoos as well, I wonder.

In their study, Roux et al. (2018) utilized oral tattoo narratives of female university students to explore the performance of creativity and identity, exploiting the concept of *skinscapes* by Peck and Stroud (2015). Roux et al. found out that creativity included figurative language in addition to the location of the tattoo, both of which produce the identity of the tattooee. They argue that tattoos are “multimodal texts

¹ Focus of linguistic landscape (LL) is on the environmental language, images and words which are displayed in public spaces. In addition to language being used by people, it also has other functions: for example, symbolic purposes. (Shohamy et al. 2009: 1).

with meanings that exceed those used in the places of origin” (2018: 14). In a similar vein, Nguyen (2010: 851) emphasizes the meaning of language in constructing self-identity. She juxtaposes linguistic behavior and language manipulation and offers slang as an example of differentiating one from the others. However, English tattoos on the skin work as modern language manipulation as well, which is why they need to be carefully researched.

2.3 English in Finland

Finland has been an officially bilingual country already since 1922, its national languages being Finnish and Swedish (Leppänen et al. 2011: 17). Leppänen and Nikula (2007: 339) acknowledge that, in the 1960s, as Finland began associating itself more and more with the Anglo-American world, English started spreading more rapidly. According to the Statistics Finland 2017, Finnish now has 87.9% and Swedish 5.2% native speakers of the population in Finland.

Taavitsainen (2003: 4) claims that “English as the lingua franca of international communication is well-attested in Finland”, and that it is nearly impossible to avoid encountering English on audio-visual media or in youth culture. She alleges that English catchphrases and fillers have recently become common newspaper language as well (ibid.: 5), which partly explains its growing popularity. Taavitsainen concludes that the use of English is slowly taking over Swedish. The two languages share similarities in semantics and pragmatics, and “for the majority of monolingual Finnish speakers, Swedish is as much a foreign language as English” (ibid.: 8).

Leppänen et al. (2011: 24) state that English is not fundamentally taking over Finland’s national languages, but its function is more of a purpose-oriented one: English is taken up by Finns to cope in social and cultural situations. Based on their study, English is by far the most significant foreign language to Finns, also surpassing Swedish, the second national language of Finland. Finns encounter English the most in their everyday lives as far as all foreign languages are considered, and in some contexts and domains (e.g. gaming and business), it is even considered more important than Finnish (ibid.: 161). Young people form a slight exception as English seems to be increasingly “an essential factor in the construction of their identities” (ibid.: 163). Leppänen (2007: 150) claims in her earlier paper that

English can be juxtaposed with hairstyles, musical preferences, and dressing to represent an individual's values and lifestyle. She concludes (ibid.: 167) quite boldly that English is required to establish and accommodate one's identity in the global and translocal community.

Kääntä et al. (2013) researched English learning in the exceptional context of Finnish Big Brother TV-format. They found out, similarly to Leppänen et al. (2011: 341) that English has an important function in young adults' lives. Finnish youth also believe that their English proficiency is better compared to older people and they report using English actively in addition to Finnish. Regarding the mix of English and Finnish, Kääntä et al. mention the phenomenon of translanguaging (as cited in Garcia 2007), meaning that "Finnish and English are simultaneously available resources for participation in a conversation that is L1-based" (2013.: 355). They claim to have researched "the impact of English on young Finns' language uses" (ibid.: 354) yet they studied but one person's use and learning of English, which undoubtedly might compromise the generalizability of the study. The study is also highly based on findings by Leppänen et al. (2011), thus somewhat repeating what was already known.

Leppänen and Nikula (2007: 334) point out a need for more detailed empirical research on English situations in Finland. They argue that "the issue of English in Finland is highly controversial" (ibid.: 340) even to this day as despite English being a foreign language in Finland, it is frequently and ubiquitously used as the only means of communication in some settings. In their paper, Leppänen and Nikula studied diverse uses of English in Finnish society in media, educational, and business contexts. Their findings show that monolingual English is common especially to the media context in Finland as Finns see English as a competitive and international language, and one needs to be ready to cope in English in given situations (ibid.: 366). At a more general level, they connect the use of English to "identity work" (ibid.: 368): English is used to denote membership to a social group, or to show one's prowess in English. They conclude, in unison with aforementioned researchers, that the spread of English should not be seen detrimental to Finnish society and Finnish language, but as something which Finns take up and use for their own personal purposes (ibid.: 368).

As far as all the mentioned studies are concerned – excluding the study by Leppänen et al. (2011) – they do not involve the whole Finland. They may present a direction where the spread of English in Finland is heading but it should be kept in mind that the situation might not be the same everywhere in Finland.

2.4 Summary of previous studies

I have in the current chapter presented how tattoos have become an everyday commodity that can be contrasted with other bodily ornaments such as clothing and make-up. Nowadays tattoos are often used as subjective identity markers and work as resources for forming one's identity. Similar to tattoos, recent studies on English in Finland also show that especially younger Finns use English more and more to express their identity (Leppänen and Nikula, 2007; Kääntä et al., 2013; Leppänen et al. 2011).

Tattoos have not been previously researched from the linguistic point of view, which makes the approach of the current study unique. As shown above, people express their identities through both tattoos and English language, which makes combining the two possible. This study will be the first to examine how English is used in tattoos to express identity in Finland.

3 Data and methodology

Data for this research were collected both quantitatively and qualitatively via an online questionnaire created with the form tool (e-lomake) provided by the University of Helsinki. Online questionnaire with a heavy emphasis on open questions was deemed the best option to gather data for two reasons in particular. First, more data could be amassed by a questionnaire distributed online compared to, for example, interviews. Secondly, since the research questions seek answers for the expressions of identity by means of English tattoos, and the characteristics of the English language tattoos in Finland, it was crucial to let the respondents talk about their tattoos freely. DeMello (2000: 12) alleges that people establish meaning for their tattoos when they speak about them: “Tattoo narratives provide emotional and intellectual context to one’s tattoos”.

Fowler (2009: 99) lists some advantages of open questions, which are all of importance here: Open questions allow the researcher to procure unanticipated replies, which were hypothesized and considered already in the planning stages of the questionnaire. He states that open questions might also permit the respondents to answer more honestly (and thus depict their real views) and with their own words. He alleges that “open questions are appropriate when the list of possible answers is longer than is feasible to present to respondents” (ibid.: 99), which indeed was the case here, especially regarding the categorizing of the answers about the individual’s reason for acquiring their tattoo, which I will explain later in the thesis.

There can be a few problems as far as both open and closed questions are concerned, however. According to Fowler (2009: 99), open questions can yield relatively scarce and more uncategorizable replies than closed questions, which in turn increase the likelihood of analytically useful and interesting answers. Nevertheless, there is always a possibility that respondents understand labels and categories of the closed questions incorrectly. People can also differ in their understanding of certain criteria for closed scales (e.g. “good” – “bad”), which can cause unreliability in the measurement (ibid.: 100).

Previous studies (e.g. Atkinson 2003; DeMello 2000; Kosut 2000; Roux et al. 2018) have mainly focused on using interviews as a method for gaining insight and

motivations for having a tattoo. For this research, interviewing would have probably yielded more comprehensive answers than an online questionnaire. However, in addition to it having been significantly more time-consuming, the quantity of answers would have also been smaller.

The aspect of researching identity was kept hidden throughout the distribution and was not once mentioned in the questionnaire, either. The reason for doing so was to get the respondents to answer as honestly as possible. Due to its abstractness, identity can mean different things to different people – and some may even associate it with something completely different – and thus to minimize the number of people who may have refrained from answering because of being researched on their identity, the mention of it was omitted.

3.1 Distribution

The questionnaire was held online for a week and the majority of the respondents were gathered during the first day (84 people) and the rest during the next six days (52 people), totaling in 136 responses. It was distributed on Facebook via public tattoo groups of different size and pages of tattoo studios (group sizes ranged from 700 members to 20,000 members) located all over Finland. Tattoo groups and studios were found with the Facebook search engine, after which admins of each page were contacted and asked for the permission to post the link to the questionnaire on their page. In some cases, the admins did not bother to answer despite me getting a notification that they had read my message, and in some cases the admins themselves offered to post the link in their group to make it accessible to an even wider audience.² The link was also shared by some of my friends on Facebook and by doing so I hoped to achieve a sort of snowball effect. To my knowledge, the link was shared by at least ten people. Brief general information about the study was provided along with the link to the questionnaire. Everyone who currently lived in Finland and had English language tattooed on their skins fulfilled the criteria of participation.

² Facebook algorithms work in a way that admins' posts to a group get seen by more group members compared to non-admins' posts.

3.2 Online questionnaire

Before distributing the questionnaire publicly, it was piloted with four of my friends to ensure the functionality of the questionnaire. The four respondents for the piloting were hand-picked and each one had an English sentence tattooed on their skin. Based on their feedback, minor changes were made to the questionnaire. Few grammatical and translational errors were corrected, and three questions were deleted because they were deemed unnecessary in the light of my research questions. The data received from the piloting was not included in the final data as I had piloted the questionnaire in a different format with a different question sequence in comparison to the final product, and thus manually transferring the answers would not have been possible.

The questionnaire³ was divided into four parts: background information, English skills, tattoos, and English tattoo 1. If the respondent had more tattoos with English in them, they could provide answers to sections English tattoo 2 and English tattoo 3, respectively. Before beginning the questionnaire, there were assurances of absolute anonymity and confidentiality presented at the top of the page. No personal information of the respondents was collected, nor was the data shared with any third parties.

The background section contained seven questions: year of birth, gender, mother tongue, current occupation, education, place of residence (countryside or city), and whether the respondent regarded themselves as a mono-, bi-, or multilingual. Year of birth and current occupation were intentionally left open-ended questions as greater variety of answers was suspected in those two. All of the other questions were closed questions due to their easily categorizable nature. The purpose of the first section was to provide a steady background for the identity analysis.

The second section was called ‘English skills’, which contained five closed questions. The questions in this section were based on Leppänen et al. (2011) because they too covered the use of English in Finland. When asking about the personal importance of English, the possibility to answer ‘I do not know’ was omitted in order to avoid middle-scaled answers. This question worked also as a

³ See Appendix A.

basis on the identity analysis, which is to be explained later in the thesis. When asking the respondent to describe their English skills, I did not want to add an answer such as ‘My English skills are poor’ and thus possibly offer someone an easy way out. Moreover, because all the questions were closed ones, it was important that the respondent thought their answers carefully and did not just rush through the section.

The next section, ‘Tattoos’, included four closed and eight open questions. The main function of this section was to provide insight into the attitudes the respondent had towards tattoos in general. The closed questions contained inquiries about the respondent’s number of tattoos and the number of tattoos one’s close friends and family members had, as well as how long one takes time to think about the tattoo before taking one. Considering the question “how long do you approximately plan about taking a tattoo in general?”, a side note was included, which advised the respondents to exclude the queue time for the tattoo artist. Open questions sought answers for the respondent’s view on other people’s tattoos, positive and negative experiences caused by their own tattoos, and whether they ever hid their tattoo or not, and if they were planning to get more tattoos in the future.

The questions in the fourth section, ‘English tattoo 1’, concerned only the tattoo that had English in it, which was also mentioned as a friendly reminder at the start of the section. The section was the most vital to the research as all the previous sections related to this one. What is more, especially the second research question discussing the characteristics of the English tattoos was highly dependable on the answers in this section. The section contained 12 open questions, which required very personal answers for most of the questions, such as “what does the tattoo mean to you?”. Two of the key questions regarding both of the research questions were “why did you decide to get the tattoo?” and “why did you take your tattoo in English?”. There were also seven closed questions which asked, for example, “how much do you like your tattoo?” and “how much do you care what others think about your tattoo?”.

With such questions in mind, the main goals of the questionnaire were to find out how Finnish individuals construct their identities through English tattoos, and to map out the characteristics of these tattoos. What is the relationship between attitudes toward English, and the use of English as a permanent marker on one’s skins?

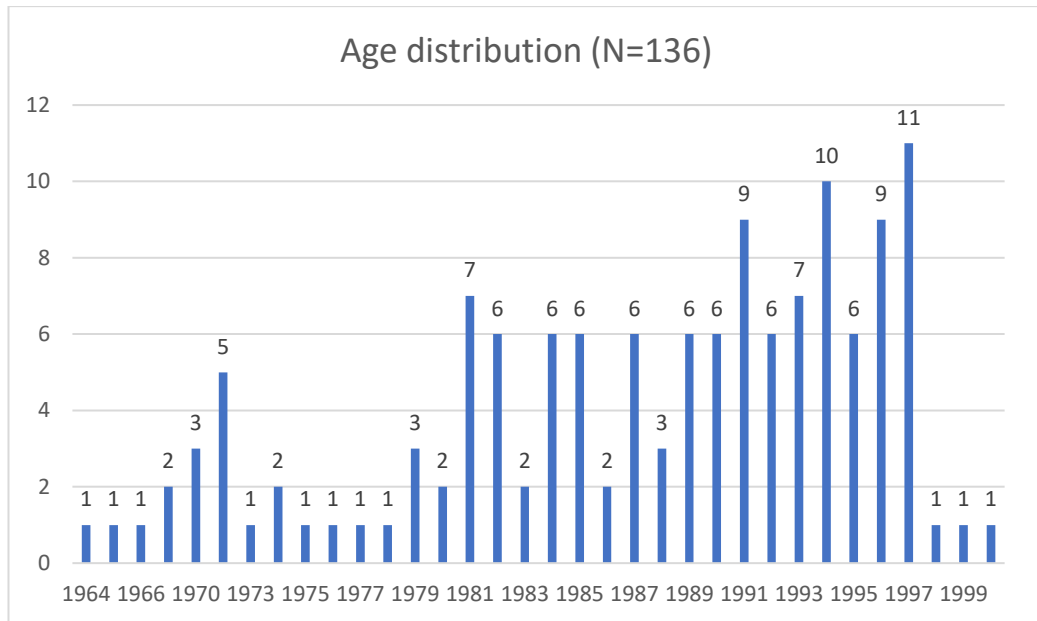


Figure 1: Age distribution

Figure 1 shows the great variety in the age distribution of the study, the oldest respondent being 55 years old and the youngest 19 at the time of the data collection. The average age among the individuals was 32. It can be seen from the figure that the majority of the respondents were born in the 1980s and 1990s.

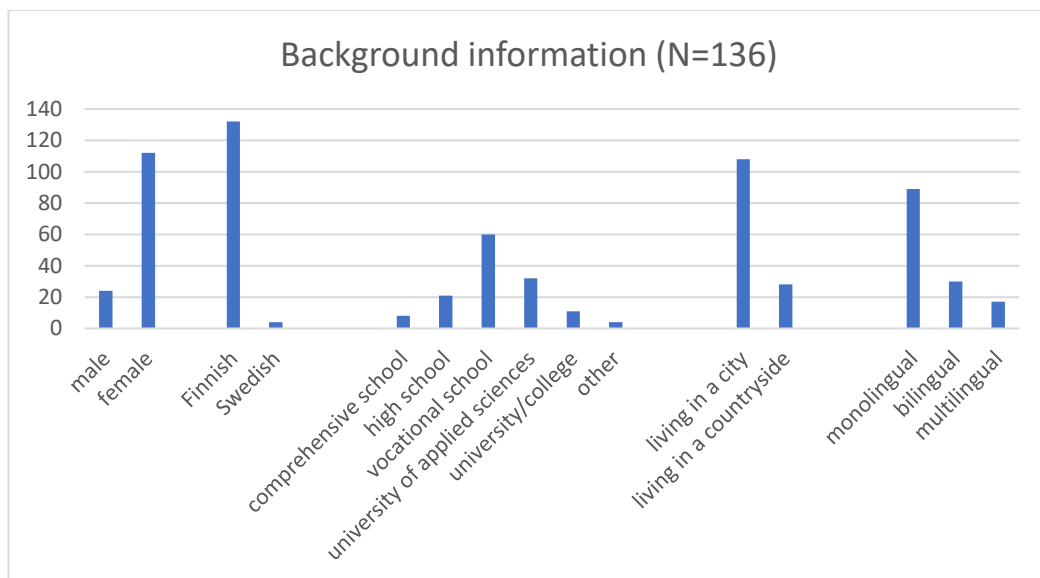


Figure 2: Background information

Figure 2 shows that 82% (n=112) of the respondents were women and 18% (n=24) men. The questionnaire also offered two other options for this question which were

‘other than male or female’ and ‘don’t want to say’, none of which were selected by anyone, however. Out of all the respondents 79% (n=108) lived in a city and 21% (n=28) in the countryside. 97% (n=132) mentioned Finnish and 3% (n=4) Swedish as their mother tongue. When inquired whether the respondents considered themselves as mono-, bi-, or multilingual, 65% (n=89) deemed themselves monolingual, 22% (n=30) bilingual, and 13% (n=17) multilingual. Education-wise, the majority of the respondents, 44% (n=60), had graduated from a vocational school, and 24% (n=32) mentioned university of applied sciences as their highest level of education. 15% (n=21) and 8% (n=11) of the individuals were from the upper secondary school and university, respectively, with the remaining 6% (n=8) choosing the option ‘comprehensive school’, and 3% (n=4) the option ‘other’.

3.3 Problematic aspects and feedback

Indisputably, one of the issues to be taken into account with online questionnaires is that of reliability as anyone with the link can answer the questions. However, no fabrications fortunately surfaced from the data. The questionnaire took more than 10 minutes to complete on average and included obligatory open answers, which might have eliminated the majority of possible misuse.

The age range was vast, the greatest emphasis (49%) being on the respondents born in the 1990s as hypothesized beforehand. Since the questionnaire was held online and distributed via Facebook pages of the tattoo parlors⁴, it might not have reached the older audience that well. What is more, respondents were not further categorized into any age-related categories, because that would have posed issues with the categories itself as I do not see that big of a difference between, for example, an 18-year-old and a 21-year-old. For this very reason, respondents were asked to manually fill in their year of birth instead of checking a box.

Distribution of genders can be viewed as a bit problematic as the difference between women and men respondents is so great. Other studies (Armstrong 1991; Atkinson 2003; DeMello 2000; Dickson 2015) have also encountered the same issue and thus allege that women reportedly have more tattoos than men in general. This could very

⁴ Hence, in order to see the post including the questionnaire, it was required of the participants to ‘like’ the tattoo shop’s Facebook page.

well be the case, but it is to be remembered here that the current study only concerned Finns who had English *text* tattooed on their skins. Thus, this might pose a slight inclination towards females, because text tattoos have usually been viewed as more feminine than masculine (Bell, 1999; DeMello, 2000), but which of course is not the main focus here. It might also tell us that women are just more eager to answer questionnaires than men.

Another minor problem surfaced while analyzing the data. It became obvious that there was too little space reserved for the question “what does your tattoo say?”, which resulted in a loss of five English tattoo texts. These five individuals wrote replies such as “does not fit here”, and “it includes a long sentence, does not fit”. Although it was not anticipated that the respondents might have text tattoos longer than 16 words, the space restraint was unintended. In addition, six answers to the concerned question were excluded from the analysis as they did not meet the requirements⁵ and were thus deemed invalid. These six replies included answers such as “en pelkää pahaa” (in Finnish), “lyrics”, “it’s a legendary quotation”, and “I don’t have an English tattoo”.

Some feedback of the questionnaire was received as well. It was not taken into account that while filling the questionnaire, e-lomake lets one cross off more than one box but when prompting to submit the form it points out that one cannot choose multiple responses to a closed question. One respondent wrote feedback saying that the question “for which reason do you use English the most?” could possibly have required more than one answer. Also, few respondents submitted the questionnaire using a mobile phone, which made the task allegedly very arduous. In hindsight, respondents could have been notified at the beginning that they should not use mobile phones to answer the questionnaire.

⁵ These responses were vague, not in English, or instead of the actual text just described the contents of the tattoo.

4 Results

Since the number of respondents was relatively high and the questionnaire included a plethora of open questions, all of the questions will not be discussed in detail. Instead, the aim is to find broader generalizable trends in the answers and focus on the responses that yield the most relevant information regarding the research questions. The number of answers in the data varies per question because some respondents did not answer some questions at all, and some answers were deemed uncategorizable in one way or another. Such responses are nevertheless shown and explained in the figures. Three people answered most of the questions in English (despite mentioning Finnish as their mother tongue), but when it comes to the answers in Finnish, they were translated into English by me.

Considering the first research question, “how is English utilized in the tattoos to express different identities in Finland?”, it is necessary to discuss the questionnaire as a whole and find links between respondents’ individual answers to construct different identities, as becomes evident below. Responses in the ‘English skills’ section of the questionnaire will provide four larger base categories for the identity analysis, in relation to which different identities are discussed. As stated before, according to Stets and Burke (2000), individuals have many different identities, which emerge depending on the stimuli and the context. Here, the stimuli being English, and the context tattoos in Finland. Thus, the focus is to find out how Finns express their identities via permanent English language ink.

For the second research question, “what are the characteristics of English language tattoos in Finland?”, however, analysis of the final sections of the questionnaire (English tattoo 1, 2, and 3) will suffice. The analysis consists mainly of what reasons the respondents had for getting the tattoo in the first place, why did they choose to have their tattoo in English, and where is the tattoo located, and why.

4.1 The expressions of different identities

Here, I will first analyze the respondents’ perceptions on English to get a broader picture of their attitudes and opinions towards the foreign language. Subsequently, a more explicit examination into individual answers will be performed to understand the functions which English has for different individuals’ identities.

4.1.1 The respondents' attitudes toward English

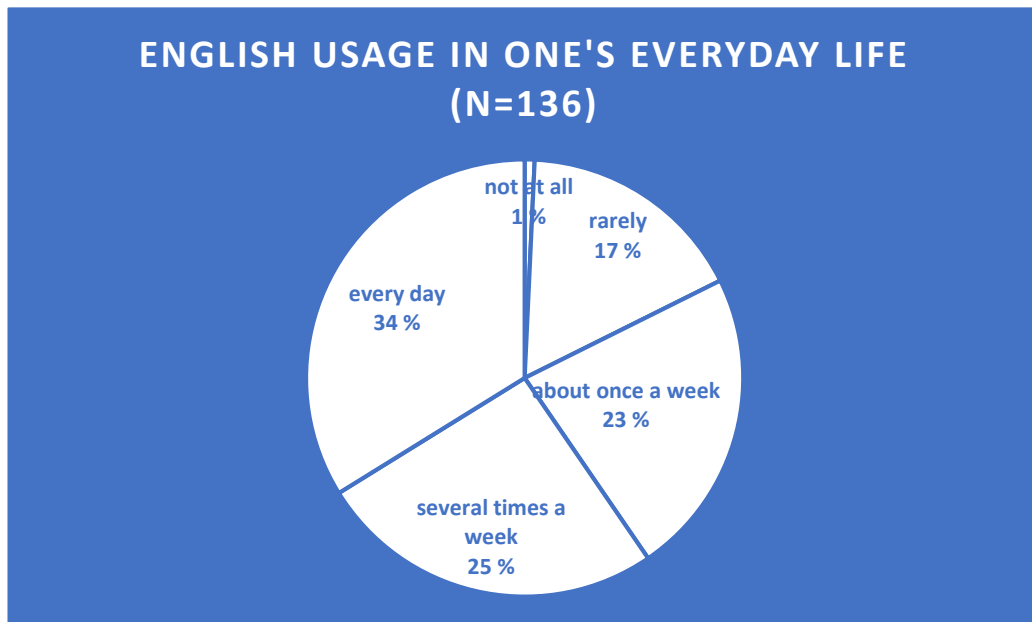


Figure 3: English usage in one's everyday life

As is evident from Figure 3, in general the use of English is very frequent: 34% (n=46) use English on a daily basis while 26% (n=35) use English several times a week. It coincides with the importance of English to the respondents: to 51% (n=70) of the respondents English has a very important function and 43% (n=58) deem English somewhat important. Only 6% altogether mention that English is not very (5%, n=6), or at all important (1%, n=2) to them.

Three most frequent reasons to use English emerged conspicuously from the data. 35% (n=48) of the respondents mentioned that they use English the most to communicate with others, whereas 26% (n=36) use English in their work or studies. 22% (n=30) imparted that they use English the most to search for information. Only 4% (n=6) used English for the fun of it, and another 4% to learn it better. 8% (n=11) claimed that they only relied on English if there were no other alternatives. The results show that English clearly is of significance to Finns and it has an important instrumental value.

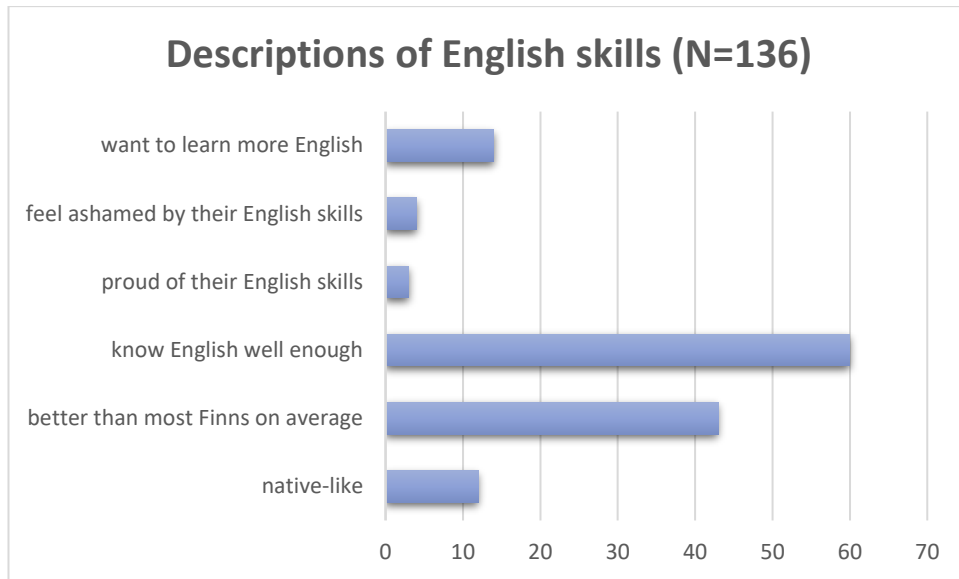


Figure 4: Descriptions of English skills

Along the same lines with Figure 3, Figure 4 shows that the great majority of the respondents (44%, $n=60$) argue to know English well enough. Of course, what ‘well enough’ means for each individual is highly subjective, yet it can be alleged that Finns are not afraid of showing their prowess in English. What is more, as much as 32% ($n=43$) claim to know English better than most Finns on average, and 9% ($n=12$) deem their English native-like, respectively, both of which indicate self-confidence in the use of English. Only 3% ($n=4$) of the respondents felt ashamed of their English skills.

4.1.2 Different identities

The respondents were further categorized into four different categories based on their answers on the importance of English – those who deemed English not at all important, not very important, somewhat important, and very important. Great variety between the middle categories (English not very important and English somewhat important) was not expected, but between the extremes (English not at all important and English very important) vast differences were to be suspected. For example, it was presumed that individuals for whom English was of no importance at all had completely different ‘English identities’ than individuals who deemed English very important. The results of the analysis turned out to support the hypothesis as becomes evident below.

| | <i>English not at all important</i> | <i>English not very important</i> | <i>English somewhat important</i> | <i>English very important</i> |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Average age | 43 | 43 | 33 | 30 |
| Men | - | 1 | 10 | 13 |
| Women | 2 | 5 | 48 | 57 |
| Lives in a city | 1 | 5 | 42 | 60 |
| Lives in countryside | 1 | 1 | 16 | 10 |
| Comprehensive school | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Upper secondary school | - | - | 8 | 13 |
| Vocational school | - | 4 | 28 | 29 |
| University of applied sciences | - | 1 | 14 | 16 |
| University | - | - | 3 | 8 |
| Other | 1 | - | 1 | 2 |
| Doesn't use English at all | 1 | - | - | - |
| Uses English rarely | 1 | 5 | 13 | 3 |
| Uses English about once a week | - | - | 18 | 13 |
| Uses English several times a week | - | - | 20 | 16 |
| Uses English every day | - | 1 | 7 | 38 |
| Has one tattoo | - | - | 2 | 2 |
| Has 1-5 tattoos | - | 3 | 20 | 27 |
| Has more than 5 tattoos | 2 | 3 | 36 | 41 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|
| <i>Has one English tattoo</i> | 1 | 5 | 35 | 49 |
| <i>Has 1-5 English tattoos</i> | 1 | 1 | 22 | 21 |
| <i>Has more than 5 English tattoos</i> | - | - | 1 | - |

Table 1: Data based on the importance of English

4.1.2.1 English not at all important

This was by far the smallest category as predicted consisting of only 1% (n=2) of the respondents out of whom all were women. The average age here was relatively high as far as the rest of the data is concerned, 43, and the highest level of education comprised only of comprehensive school and ‘the other’ option. All of the respondents also imparted that they use English only when there are no alternatives, and that they are ashamed of their English skills. When asked what positive experiences they had had because of their tattoos, it was mentioned that people often stopped to stare and inquire the meaning behind their tattoos – no negative experiences were reported, though. However, all of the respondents in this category answered that the tattoo meant them very much regardless of the language of their tattoo, which was not important at all.

The function which English has here is of interest. Even though the respondents did not value English high and they rather abstained from using it, they still chose to have their tattoos in English. One respondent says that her family roots are in Denmark, which is why she has “Viking family” tattooed on her arm. Quite controversially, the reason she took the tattoo was to strengthen, or perpetuate, her Danish identity but she decided to get the tattoo in English rather than in Danish. She claims that the tattoo has not changed her in any way, and that she only prefers the aesthetic function of English over Finnish, which is why she took the tattoo in English in the first place. Similar answers in this category included responses such as “it just felt better to have a tattoo in English”.

4.1.2.2 *English not very important*

5% (n=6) of the respondents did not deem English very important to their lives. The average age here was also 43, which clearly indicates that the older generation does not see English as important to them as younger people. Apart from one individual, all of the respondents were women in this category, too. The majority of the respondents lived in a city and mentioned vocational school as their highest level of education. Half of the individuals claimed to use English when there were no other alternatives and half felt that they knew English well enough.

One respondent, who had a degree from university of applied sciences, claimed to use English every day because of her job. She deemed herself to be a multilingual person and felt that she knew English better than most Finns on average, yet she did not regard English as important to her. The reason why she took her tattoo in English was because she wanted to preserve the song lyrics in their original form. She maintained that the meaning of the tattoo is very important to her, even though she frequently chooses to hide her tattoo. The function of English here is clearly to convey some other meaning, regardless of whether the language is accounted as important or not. A similar deduction can be made on the basis of her claim that she plans her tattoos over a year in advance in general. Tattoos for this individual can be seen as very personal as she adds that “my tattoos do not belong to any other than me”, yet she decided to answer to the questionnaire and wanted to tell about her tattoos.

Another respondent had taken her ‘Family’ tattoo, because her deceased daughter had a similar one. This was the first tattoo for her, and she added that due to the meaning of the tattoo she looks at it daily. The reason for choosing English as the language of the tattoo has nothing to do with the language itself but the function which the language transmits. English has taken on a completely different role, which is to convey some other significant personal meaning as also stated in the paragraph above.

One individual argued that she did not want a tattoo in Finnish, which is why she took her tattoo in English. Moreover, she claimed that the tattoo ‘The prettiest thing you can wear is a smile’ describes her well, even though she does not deem English

very important to her personally. Neither does she use English but rarely, yet the meaning is very important to her and she says that the tattoo to is her favorite one. One cannot but wonder what the function of English is here as no further justifications or arguments were provided. It seems that the individual simply aesthetically prefers written English to Finnish, even though English is of no importance to her otherwise.

All of the other reasons for choosing English as the language of the tattoo in this category were because Finnish was deemed somehow “stupid”, and because individuals wanted to retain the original language. If the language does not mean much to someone or one does not know how to use it well enough, it cannot be assumed to have that much meaning in itself. Rather, the language functions as something more superficial. English might also have symbolical value to these individuals as they have nevertheless opted to use English rather than Finnish.

4.1.2.3 English somewhat important

This category provided the greatest dispersion in the data between the respondents, partly because it was the second largest category in the data (43%, n=58), and partly because it was perhaps an easier option to choose as it was in the middle. In comparison to the two aforementioned categories, the average age plummeted to 33 and there were more alteration education-wise – more people mentioned university of applied sciences and university as their highest level of education, however, vocational school still maintained its place as the most frequently adduced one.

A 46-year-old respondent, who had graduated from university, mentioned conversations with strangers as a positive experience when it came to tattoos. He vindicated his need to have more tattoos in the future by explicitly stating that they were a part of his identity and even described his text tattoos as “linguistic art”. The reason he took his tattoo in English was because he did not deem Finnish fitting, and because “not everybody gets English”. Even though he considered himself as a monolingual person, who uses English only rarely because of work, he chose to have a tattoo in English perhaps to spark conversation and draw attention as he also added that he never hides the tattoo. Moreover, he mentioned that it is very important for him what others think about his tattoo. Here, the importance of English is

emphasized as a means for a person to construct his identity in relation to how others see him or how he assumes they will see him.

One individual mentions that she knows English well enough and uses it a few times a week mainly to search for information. She had taken her ‘Celebrate the life [child’s name]’ tattoo when she was 19, which she had later covered with a picture, however, because she did not like how the tattoo turned out. She elucidates that getting the tattoo in English felt good back then but not anymore, which is why she decided to have the text covered. Moreover, she mentions that she really cares about what others think about her tattoos and imparts an example where some people had critiqued her English tattoo a lot. Covering the tattoo has also changed her as a person and has made her realize what her style is and what it is not. She elaborates that “it is okay to change your mind and cover your tattoos”. This could be argued to be an instance of an altered identity. She was young when she took her tattoo in English without much thinking about it, and the negative feedback from the others had an impact on her identity – thus she ended up covering the tattoo. She concludes that if she were to get a new text tattoo it would be in Finnish because she thinks it would feel “more natural, and more original” for her now.

Another respondent, a 35-year-old man who mentions Swedish as his mother tongue, considers himself multilingual. He uses English on a daily basis to search for information and feels that his knowledge of English is native-like. He claims that he does not plan about getting a tattoo at all in general and that he frequently does tattoos on his friends and himself, too. His tattoo in question is self-made and it is in English because he wanted to preserve the original form (lyrics). He argues that it is one of the first tattoos he has made and thus it is not his favorite as he would have wanted the tattoo to be more ambitious. Despite one being adept in English does not always align with tattoos – the respondent simply liked the song whence the lyrics are from – and he mentions that the sole reason why he made the tattoo was to get practice.

4.1.2.4 English very important

The average age was the lowest here, 30, despite this being the largest category with 51% (n=70) of the respondents. The amount of men and women was also the closest

to each other in comparison to the other categories, however, there were still considerably more females. Vocational school was the highest level of education in average, although university of applied sciences and university got close. There were also an equal amount of those who considered themselves monolingual versus bi- and multilingual. 63% (n=44) of the individuals used English on an everyday basis, which correlates closely to those who considered themselves as bi- or multilingual. Half of the respondents felt that they knew English better than the most Finns on average, and 38% (n=27) would rather use English than Finnish on their everyday lives. The respondents in this category also planned the longest time before taking a tattoo in general and had the most English tattoos in comparison to the individuals in other categories.

One respondent described how her tattoo had changed her in a way that it had made her mentally stronger and more content with her body. This is well linked to the mention that she cares a lot what others, including complete strangers, think about her tattoo. She imparts that when the man who she was seeing mentioned that he did not like that she took new tattoos, she felt that he did not accept her the way she was and thus stopped seeing the man. She took the tattoo in question after her dog's name whom she had named in English, and further described how her dog means a world to her. Even though she uses English only about once a week, the meaning of the foreign language is very important to her. This could be explained by the fact that because her dog, who is named in English is very important to her, also strengthens the meaning of English.

Another respondent imparted how she has learned to define herself by her English tattoos: "they tell a story, they remind you where you come from and where you're going". She said that she prefers the composition of English words to Finnish words and that she feels more complete when she sees the semblance which she likes and which she has herself designed. She further described that it is important that people all over the world can understand her story. English works here clearly as a mutual conveyor of self, and as seen above, she reflects her identity from the others – it does not matter where one is from when everyone understands the same language.

One respondent claims that she uses English daily because of her studies. She took her tattoo when she was 17 and thought that "English sounded better than Finnish

back then”. She states that her opinion on the matter has changed since and that her next tattoo would most certainly be in Finnish. She does not like her English tattoo at all and describes it as ugly – she even thinks to get the tattoo removed. Here, another extreme example of an altered identity can be seen. She used to think that English was “cool” in some way when she was young but later as she grew as a person, and perhaps also due to her increased everyday usage of English, which she mentions, the tattoo does not look exquisite to her anymore.

One man describes having taken his bilingual ‘Suomi Finland’ tattoo to show love for his home country. The tattoo is located on his left shoulder, close to his heart, and is in both Finnish and English so that everyone could understand it, and the text is accompanied with a picture of heraldic lion. He states quite strongly and self-consciously that because of the tattoo “everyone thinks that I’m a racist, which is not true”. He claims that he does not care at all what others think about the tattoo and that the tattoo means a lot to him. He sees no need to hide the tattoo, which reflects a strong identity to wield such a tattoo which is regarded as racist by many because of its recent connotations to the extreme right in political context.

One individual states that she speaks English on a daily basis with her friends because it is their favorite language, despite all of them having Finnish as a mother tongue. She wanted to have a tattoo, too, in English so that everyone could understand what it says. She argues that she will have more tattoos in the future because she feels that she is not “complete” yet. In this case, English significantly defines who she is as she feels that she cannot express herself to full extent in her own mother tongue. In her own words, by having more tattoos in English “completes” her identity.

Another individual had his tattoo taken based on a video game when he was younger, because the text “sounded cool”. He claims that he uses English every day while playing video games and English has thus become a very valuable asset for him. He explains that whilst speaking English for many years when playing video games, he has also begun to think in English rather than in Finnish. Similarly, his tattoo has gained new meanings as he has learned and used English more. He argues that “as the years have gone by, I have contemplated my tattooed text more, which must have given it some new meaning, I think”. He adds that because of the English tattoo, he

has also been more motivated in life in general: “The idea of the tattoo kind of dies, I think, if you don’t live your life up to the idea”. What can be deduced here is that along with the personal growth and the visible English tattoo working as a kind of mentor, English has become a strong part of his identity.

4.2 Characteristics of English language tattoos

The contents of each individual’s tattoos varied a lot as expected.⁶ Justifications for the English language, their locations, and meanings will be analyzed here in addition to whether the tattooed text was accompanied with a picture or not. By analyzing these questions in detail, a somewhat general picture of the characteristics of English tattoos in Finland can be drawn.

All of the analysis was done based on the respondents’ answers, and the categories were thus also further composed on the grounds of these answers. Reasons for getting the tattoo were categorized based on Atkinson (2003) and Dickson (2015), yet it was deemed necessary to modify the categories. When analyzing the justifications for choosing English as the language of the tattoo, one of the common features was to compare Finnish to English even though it was not mentioned once in the question.

The majority of the respondents were not new to the tattoo scene as 60% (n=81) mentioned to have more than five tattoos. 37% (n=51) had from two to five tattoos, and only 3% (n=4) had but one tattoo. 68% (n=93) individuals had one tattoo in English, whereas 31% (n=42) had from two to five tattoos, and only one person had more than five tattoos, which included English. It was also common to have friends and family members with tattoos: 68% (n=92) had more than five close friends who had tattoos, and only 1% (n=2) claimed that they had no tattooed friends or family members whatsoever.

⁶ See Appendix B for the list of all the tattoos.

4.2.1 Reasons for getting the English language tattoo

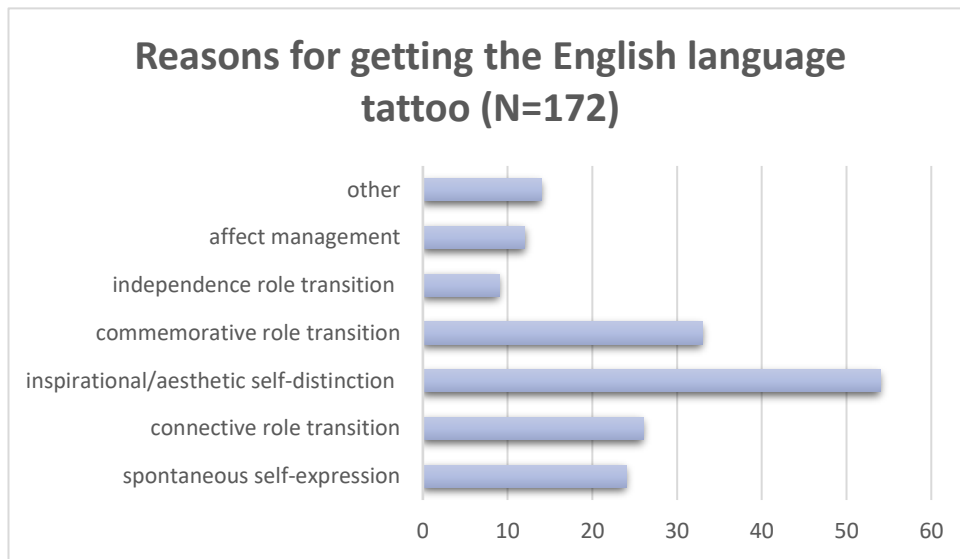


Figure 5: Reasons for getting the English language tattoo

The question “what does the tattoo mean to you?” was analyzed based on categories first devised by Atkinson (2003), and later expanded by Dickson (2015). Categories were modified even further, however, as at times it was impossible to decide to which category an answer would belong. The original categories seemed to overlap frequently, too, thus some were combined and some erased, resulting in new seven categories as shown in Figure 5.

Categories for reasons for getting the tattoo included ‘spontaneous self-expression’ (e.g. “just wanted one”), ‘connective role transition’ (i.e. bonds and connections to friends, family members, and pets), ‘inspirational/aesthetic self-distinction’ (i.e. personal statements, empowerment, and inspirational quotes and symbols), ‘commemorative role transition’ (i.e. life events, turning points), ‘independence role transition’ (i.e. statements of independence or rebellion), ‘affect management’ (i.e. reminder or memorial of loved one), and ‘other’ (i.e. if the respondent did not provide any context for the reason of their tattoo, or left the open box blank).

The most common reason for getting permanent ink on one’s skin was ‘inspirational/aesthetic self-distinction’ (31%, n=54). The category consists of tattoos which are, in one way or another, statements of inspiration or empowerment for the individual, for example ‘When the world says give up, hope whispers try one more

time' was taken by one respondent to transform pain and sadness into something beautiful. I chose to also include symbols in this category as they convey similar associations. One respondent described that his tattoo 'Affection' depicts the eternal love between him and his wife and added that his wife shares the same text, too. Another individual had 'Peace' tattooed on her skin, and for her the tattoo indicated her impatient personality. One student had 'She slept with wolves without fear, for the wolves knew a lion was among them' tattooed on her arm and she wrote that because her zodiac sign was Leo, she experienced her lion-kind identity very strongly via the tattoo. 'Stay true' was tattooed on one individual's wrist, which was allegedly one of the biggest guidelines in his life. Few respondents solely imparted that their tattoos denote empowerment, for example "it gives me strength" was a common answer.

Another common justification was labelled as 'commemorative role transition'. 19% (n=33) of the respondents had taken their tattoo to mark a turning point in life, or to archive a life event. One individual described her 'Create your own path' tattoo as follows: "When I took the tattoo, I was lost, and needed a reminder that if you can't find a ready path to follow, you can always clear your own path. Wherever you were, you are always welcome home". Another respondent implied that she took her tattoo after a difficult life event, and that the tattoo 'Never Stop Believing – Miracles Happen' denotes faith in the future. Tattoos were also taken after a divorce ("I took the tattoo after the divorce as a reminder that one can survive anything"), giving birth ("I'll never forget the moment I first met my kids"), and after overcoming depression ("One of my few tattoos which actually has a meaning. I took it after I overcame depression").

'Connective role transition' was the third-common reason for having a tattoo. 15% (n=26) imparted that they took their tattoos to denote bond, or connection to a close friend, family member, or pet. One respondent wrote that she took her 'But never hold me down' tattoo together with her friend: "The tattoo means a world to me; the beginning of the sentence is tattooed on the side of my best friend". Another individual had taken his tattoo as a kudos to his wife ('Thank you'), one for her children ('My everything'), and one at the same time with her sister ('Big sister'). Pets were also seen as an integral part of many families, which is why they were

chosen to include into this category, too. Arguments such as “My dog is very precious to me, and I wanted him/her to be on my skin forever” were abundant as well.

14% (n=24) of the respondents had no specific meaning behind their tattoo or at least did not mention it. The category ‘spontaneous self-expression’ includes many different arguments, nevertheless. One contemporary tattoo artist described her tattoo as a rather spontaneous act: she had practiced realistic looking lips on herself at the time when she was just a beginner, but the tattoo turned out to look like a woman’s genitals. To “save” her tattoo, she added text next to it. Few individuals had theirs as a walk-in tattoo⁷ and thus had not planned them at all beforehand. One respondent imparted that she took her tattoo ‘Loyal to no one, no one but you’ because it was a cool text to her mind. Answers such as “needed to fill up the empty space [on the skin] with something”, “it doesn’t have any meaning”, and “I don’t know why I took it” were also categorized here.

7% (n=12) had taken their tattoo as an affect management. As this category bears resemblance to the ‘connective role transition’ category, it is worth mentioning here that only the answers which implied that the tattoo served as remembrance of a passed loved one (family members, friends, pets) were categorized here. This category consists of the most subjective and emotional responses, understandably. One individual had taken an excerpt of U2’s lyrics ‘sometimes you can’t make it on your own’ to commemorate her mother, and another one had ‘Nothing gold can stay’ for the same reason. ‘Eternity love’ was tattooed on one respondent’s skin to honor the memory of her passed away child, and lyrics ‘So close no matter how far’ from Metallica as a memorial of one respondent’s husband. ‘Forever together, never apart. Maybe in distance, but never in heart.’ was tattooed in memory of one respondent’s first dog.

5% (n=9) of the responses denoted statements of independence or rebellion. The category ‘independence role transition’ includes justifications such as “The tattoo describes my life as a someone different”, and “it reminds me that I’m such a king”.

⁷ A “walk-in” (or a “flash”) is a tattoo which is took when a client literally walks into the tattoo parlour without an appointment. There are tattoo shops which are specialized in walk-in tattoos, and shops which do not do any walk-ins. Walk-in tattoos are also usually smaller in size.

One individual described that she wanted a tattoo immediately when she turned 18 because her parents did not let her have it sooner.

The last category, ‘other’, comprised answers which did not include any context to the tattoo and were thus impossible to categorize otherwise. Moreover, blank boxes were also counted here. A common response in this category was, for example, “lyrics” or “it’s a song”.

4.2.2 Justifications for the English language in the tattoo

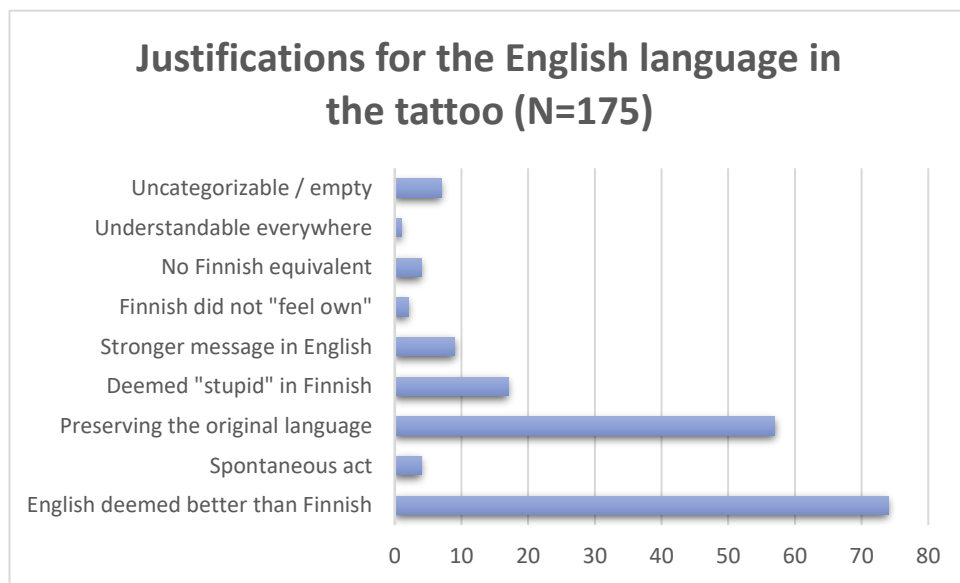


Figure 6: Justifications for the English language in the tattoo

As Figure 6 shows, the respondents had various reasons for using English in their tattoos. This was an open question in the questionnaire, and the answers were categorized based on reasonable generalizations. The most common justification for having the tattoo in English was distinctly because it was deemed a “better” language than Finnish. Even though the question was simply “why did you take your tattoo in English?”, a lot of respondents (42%, $n=74$) compared English to Finnish as is evident in the figure. The respondents argued further that English, in both written and spoken form, was perceived aesthetically more beautiful and rational than Finnish. Arguments included comments, such as:

R1: The thought was more beautiful in English.

R2: English is one of my favorite languages.

R3: It's better expressed in English.

R4: I prefer English to Finnish in this context.

R5: Wouldn't have worked in Finnish.

R6: *Breathe* looks more beautiful than *hengitä*.

R7: Finnish wasn't even an option.

R8: Written English is more beautiful than written Finnish.

Few respondents wrote that they had taken their tattoos in English because when they were young, they deemed English somehow “cool”, but now their opinions on the matter had changed.

Preserving the original language was the second-most common reason for having the tattoo in English (33%, n=57). This category can be further divided into three sub-categories: lyrics / name of the band or song (58%), quote / aphorism (21%), other / reason not specified (21%). The lyrics were often very important to the respondents, which is why they were tattooed in their original form. Answers regarding the lyrics were, for example:

R9: The song is in English.

R10: The excerpt is from an English poem.

R11: The lyrics are meaningful for me and fit better in English.

The function of quotes and aphorisms was more a question of identification and inspiration, for instance:

R12: Aphorism in any other language didn't fascinate me.

R13: It's a saying by Elvis and it describes me well.

R14: It's an English aphorism. English is a natural language for contemplative thinking for me.

The last sub-category included banal answers such as “it's an English word”, and “English is the original language and you can't say that well in Finnish”.

It was rather surprising that 10% (n=17) of the respondents deemed Finnish “stupid” in comparison to English. The answers of this category could have been included in the most common category discussed above but were distinguished as a category of their own, however, as they were deemed significantly more emphatic. “It would sound stupid/dumb in Finnish” was the most common answer in this category. The respondents did not give any further justifications how and why exactly they thought that Finnish was stupid.

5% (n=9) felt that English conveys a stronger message than Finnish. This can be a very subjective and emotional matter for different individuals which is also indicated by the fewer number of replies, and the answers were categorized here only when it was absolutely obvious that this was the reasoning behind the language choice. Arguments for this were, for instance:

R15: I feel that the message is ‘stronger’ in English.

R16: It’s a text which has given me strength for years.

R17: English crystallizes a thought which is very important for me.

Two respondents mentioned that they took the tattoo in English because the Finnish equivalent did not exist.

R18: Well, try to translate that in Finnish.

R19: There is no Finnish equivalent to this music genre.

2% (n=4) took the English language tattoo as a spontaneous act explaining that they “just wanted a four-letter word” (to be fitting to be tattooed on their knuckles), and “it was a ready-made design and I just took it”.

A small portion, 1% (n=2), claimed that Finnish did not “feel own”, and one respondent wanted a tattoo which could be understood everywhere, and by anyone. These two small categories included justifications such as “I feel that English describes me better than Finnish”, and “everyone can read it because English is an international language”, respectively.

The last category contains answers (4%, n=7) which were left empty⁸, offered no opinion whatsoever⁹, were uncategorizable regarding the other categories, or could not form a category on their own. Two respondents described respectively that “the tattoo is my nickname”, and “I got the tattoo because my daughter has one too”, which could not be categorized anywhere in the light of the composed categories. Two respondents described that they took their tattoos in English because they did not know how to translate them in another language: “nobody knew how to translate it to Latin”, and “the original quote was in French but at the time the transcript was not available online and one cannot trust the machine translations, so I ended up having it in English rather than writing it wrong in French”.

Moreover, in 55% (n=91) of the incidents the text tattoo was accompanied with a picture. Some argued that the text would look bare alone, and some stated that the picture itself was more important than the text. In some cases, the text was accompanied with a symbol and thus could not work by itself. For example, one individual had the text ‘If I fall, Nothing is over’ supplemented with a lily, which to her symbolized resilience. In the most cases, however, the text and the picture supported each other.

In comparison, 45% (n=73) of the respondents felt that the text did not need a picture with it. Arguments for this included

R20: It does not need a picture; the text tells everything.

R21: I like my tattoo how it is.

R22: I don’t think that a picture would fit in with the text.

Other arguments for not having an accompanying picture included limited space, for example “the text itself is so big that it takes all the space unfortunately”. In addition, many people claimed that they had planned a picture to be tattooed next to the text but had not yet done so, mostly due to monetary and temporal reasons.

⁸ Even though the question was marked as obligatory, one respondent skipped the question by writing a hyphen.

⁹ Included two answers: “why not” and “I cannot say”.

4.2.3 Location of the tattoo

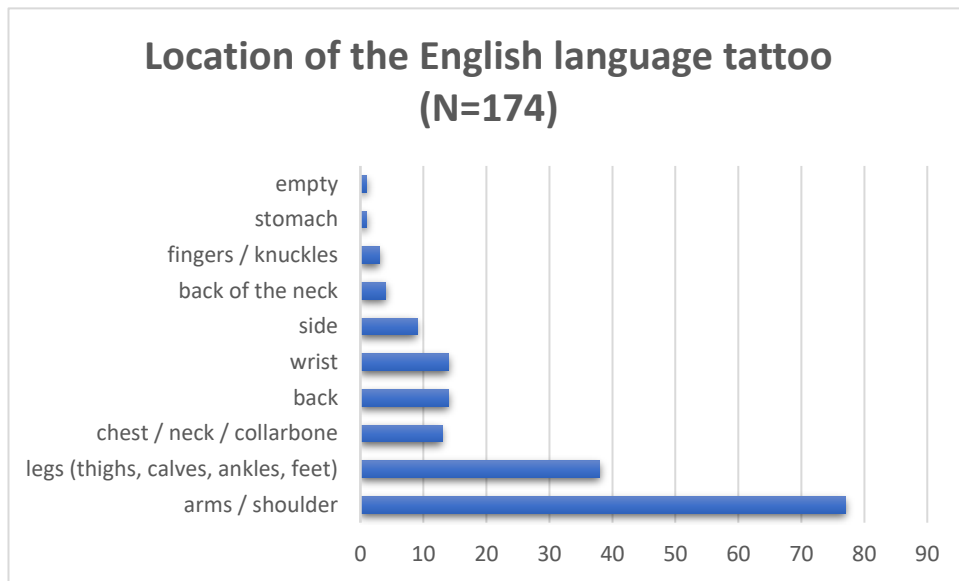


Figure 7: Location of the English language tattoo

Figure 7 shows the classification of the respondents' tattoo locations. The categories were devised to include general areas of the human body, which is why, for example, 'legs' were formed as a one larger category. Had the individual their tattoo on their sole, ankle, or thigh, the answer was categorized in 'legs'. However, 'wrist' was distinguished from 'arms' because both were deemed as a commonplace and they conveyed different function for the tattoo, wrist being indisputably more difficult to hide than arms, for example. 'Fingers/knuckles', which could be considered as an extreme place for a tattoo, was differentiated from 'arms' for the very same reason. Justifications behind the placement were inquired, too, but most respondents chose to leave that question unanswered.

The most common location for the tattoo were distinctly arms and shoulders (45%, $n=77$), which were most frequently chosen because of spatial issues. A myriad of respondents adduced that arms are the perfect location to have a large tattoo on. One individual claimed that she had the tattoo on her left bicep because it felt as the most natural placement for her, and another one had chosen the location because the tattoo was easy to hide when needed. One respondent described her shoulder tattoo thus: "My tattoo is on my left shoulder, I think it's a beautiful place for the memorial tattoo".

22% (n=38) of the respondents had tattoos on their legs (thighs, calves, feet, ankles). The justifications varied subjectively, but the most common reason to have a tattoo on legs was because of concealment purposes. One individual stated she had taken the tattoo on her foot when she was but 16 years old and had no idea or memory of it. Thigh was described as a fitting place for a tattoo because one could see it easily there, and if need be hide it too. One respondent had placed her tattoo on her left calf, because she deemed it the best place for the long text.

Back and wrist shared the place as the third-common location, 8% (n=14) in each. Back was mentioned a good place for the first tattoo as it did not allegedly hurt as much as in comparison to the other locations of the human body. Two individuals described that they had gotten their tattoos on their wrists because the petite text looked good there. More uncommon locations included side (5%, n=9), back of the neck (2%, n=4), fingers and knuckles (2%, n=3), and stomach (1%, n=1). Side was argued to be a good place because of its large area, and one individual had taken the tattoo on his knuckles because he wanted them to be seen at all times.

What constitutes a “natural” or “beautiful” place for a tattoo is highly subjective and the matter was not analyzed further as it was not deemed essential in the light of the focus of the thesis.

5 Discussion

The goals of this study were met by establishing a strong background with the numerous studies discussed in the second section of the thesis, and by conducting an online questionnaire concentrating on English text tattoos and their function in expressing different identities in Finland. In this chapter, the meanings of the results will be discussed and further contrasted with the previous studies in the field.

The role of English in identity construction varied significantly depending on the importance of English for the individuals. Older respondents did not deem English as important as younger people, which can be due to different reasons. They might not have had as good an education in English as adolescents today, and because English has gained ground all over the world as one of the most important lingua franca, they easily feel ashamed of their English skills. Previous studies about the matter (Leppänen and Nikula 2007; Leppänen 2011; Kääntä et al. 2013) also show likewise.

In “English somewhat important” category, most of the respondents imparted that they knew English well enough, but in “English very important” category, the majority felt that they knew English better than most Finns on average. Out of all the respondents in the latter category, half of the respondents deemed themselves bi- or multilinguals and 63% (n=44) used English every day. 33% (n=23) would also use English rather than Finnish on the daily basis for the rest of their lives. The individuals for whom English was very important were also the most highly educated on average.

It is difficult to categorize the functions of English for different identities since they are enormously subjective to each and every one. However, some broader generalizations can be made from the analysis on the basis of the respondents’ answers:

- 1) Negative impact of English on one’s identity – English was seen as somewhat “cool” and “intriguing” in the individuals’ adolescence, but due to personal growth and increased use of the language its meaning had started to decrease. Also, the opinions of others had significant impact on some identities: especially the negative feedback on one’s tattoos had caused some to cover their English texts. Some respondents

even mentioned that they wanted to have their English tattoos completely removed in the near future. This correlates to the findings by Atkinson (2003) that tattooed individuals often feared negative reactions from others. The current study confirms the observation that one is easily affected by others' opinions about one's tattoos.

2) Positive impact of English on one's identity – Distinctive to the categories in which the respondents deemed English important and very important, English had become a part of one's identity and self-concept due to, for example, increased use and personal growth. Some individuals described how their English tattoos had gained more meaning as they had begun to understand the language more and the others how English had always been a part of their identity. Despite having Finnish as one's mother tongue, Finnish was frequently described as not being enough to express oneself to full extent.

3) Aesthetic English – Especially in the first two categories, where the respondents did not deem English important to them, English did not have any meaning in itself, but it rather conveyed some other personal meanings. In other words, these individuals had English tattoos because they either liked the composition of English words or just badly wanted a tattoo, which is closely connected to spontaneous self-expression. Because English is everywhere in popular culture, even those who do not speak English that well encounter it all the time and can use it mechanically to reuse song lyrics, for instance. In one example, the mother wanted to have a tattoo to commemorate her daughter who had passed away by getting the same tattoo her daughter had, which just happened to be in English.

Fisher (2002: 103) argues that "identity is fixed on what we are, rather than what we are becoming", the claim which the results of the current study show false. My research presents a lot of examples of how identities are altered – both positively and negatively – due to different subjective reasons, and are not, thus, by any means fixed. As Colopelnic (2011) states, and which also becomes evident in the light of my findings, tattoos are double-dimensional for they preserve a subjective meaning

for the individual's identity, and another meaning for the observing spectator of the tattoo.

Justifications for having a tattoo were analyzed based on categories by Atkinson (2003) and Dickson (2015). They were further modified, however, to better suit the needs of the current study. The most common reasons to have a tattoo coincided with Dickson's findings on the college students: 'inspirational/aesthetic self-distinction' (subjective statements of inspiration or empowerment), 'commemorative role transition' (archives of a life event or turning point in life), and 'connective role transition' (bonds with a friend or pet). To have a tattoo to convey independence or rebellion was the smallest category, which contradicts the very old and biased argument that tattoos are a stigma of rebels and prisoners. The current study shows that the most common reason in this category was that since the respondents' parents would not have allowed them to take a tattoo underage, they took one anyway in rebellion stating that "this is my body, I can do what I want with it".

Perhaps quite surprisingly, the most common reason for Finns to take a tattoo in English was because the language was deemed "better", and more aesthetically pleasing than the respondents' own mother tongue, Finnish. It is difficult to speculate why there is such a consensus in the answers and exactly *how* does English look better than Finnish. It could be argued that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but the results of the current study clearly show unanimous arguments in the preference of English. The second-most common justification for the English language was the individuals' urge to preserve the original language of the text also in their tattoo. The text tattoos were mostly lyrics, song titles, aphorisms, and quotes, yet a lot of respondents mentioned that they considered others' "cliché tattoos" corny.

In his comprehensive research, Atkinson (2003) claimed that tattoo locations vary between men and women, men having tattoos in arms because they can be easily seen by others there, and the most common location for women being the lower back mainly for concealment purposes. The current study shows somewhat different results: While men have the most tattoos in arms, it is not because they want them to be seen, but mostly because they are easy to hide with a long sleeve or a t-shirt when needed. Women have the most tattoos in arms and legs altogether and not in the lower back by any means. It has been 16 years already since Atkinson's study and

due to contemporary and geographical preferences some of his findings may seem outdated to this day. Nonetheless, my data shows that the locations of tattoos are clearly of importance mostly to the individuals who have fewer tattoos. Those who had more tattoos were more eager to claim that the tattoos do not symbolize anything that significant to them and were taken, for example, to fill the empty gap on one's skin. The locations of text tattoos may vary in comparison to picture tattoos, which might be something to look into in the future.

Bell (1999) alleges that tattoos of men and women differ significantly: women choose softer pictures than men who in turn pick macho imagery. I venture to disagree on this as much time has come to pass since Bell's study and attitudes towards tattoos have changed and genders mixed. The current study does not have much to say about the claim presented by Bell as the focus was on the text tattoos and not pictures. What can be stated here, however, is that men and women had similar kinds of symbols and pictures accompanying their text tattoos. Nevertheless, tattoos are (almost always) permanent and the tattoos taken at the time of Bell's writing will persist and probably be seen perverting the results of tattoo-related studies in the future as well. Thus, it would be important to look at how tattoo designs differ between generations.

The questionnaire showed similar remarks on the still-persisting negative stigma caused by tattoos as earlier studies (e.g. Armstrong 1997; Buss and Hodges 2017). The respondents mentioned that because of their tattoos, they felt like they were sometimes looked at cheaply and grudgingly and some had even been asked whether they had been in jail and how often they did drugs. Many imparted quite strongly that despite "everyone" having tattoos nowadays, tattooed people are still believed to be somehow "worse" than "normal" people.

36% (n=49) of all the respondents chose to hide their tattoos on a regular basis most frequently due to work situations and when they wanted to "avoid getting stigmatized" in public areas, which indicates how strong the stigma of the tattoo still is in the contemporary world. However, despite this, 96% (n=130) stated that they were definitely going to have more tattoos in the future, while 2% (n=3) were unsure and the remaining 2% (n=3) had decided not to have any more tattoos ever again.

My results show what Leppänen (2011) and Kääntä et al. (2013) also discussed in their studies that English indeed is a significant factor for constructing identity in Finland, especially for younger people. The analysis of the current study coincides with the claim by Leppänen and Nikula (2007) that the use of English is highly subjective to each individual since not everyone uses English on a daily basis and for the same reasons, nor does everyone have the same skills and knowledge of the language.

Although the number of participants was relatively high, a larger study on the similar topic would probably bring even more considerable results. In the current study the focus was solely on English tattoos, and thus in the future it would be fruitful to look at the text tattoos in all languages in Finland. Those results could then be compared to my results and see what differences and similarities emerge. In that way, a complete linguistic landscape, or *skinscape*, of the different text tattoos in Finland could be established.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, the focus has been on how identities are expressed by means of English text tattoos in Finland. Moreover, general characteristics of English language tattoos were studied in regards of their composition, location, and what justifications there were behind the tattoos. Data were collected with an online questionnaire and then analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

The results show that English has highly differing subjective functions for each individual, yet broader generalizations can be made: English was seen to alter identity positively and negatively depending on its importance to the respondents. Especially those individuals who did not consider English important in their lives, its function was more of an aesthetic nature. The most common reasons to have a tattoo in English were as statements of inspiration or empowerment for the individual, to immortalize a turning point or important event in one's life, and to denote bond or connection with close friends, family members, and pets. English was chosen as the language of the tattoo because it was deemed "better" and more beautiful than Finnish, and because the respondents wanted to preserve the original form of the utterance, *inter alia* quotes, aphorisms, and song lyrics. Placements of the tattoos varied a lot as suspected, but arms and legs were the most frequently tattooed locations for both men and women.

From the participation numbers to the current study, it can be deduced that women still have more tattoos than men, which relates to the findings of the earlier studies as well (Armstrong 1991; Braverman 2012; DeMello 2000; Atkinson 2003; Dickson 2015). Of course, as speculated before, this research only concerned English text tattoos and not *all* possible tattoos, which might slightly distort the gender distribution. It would be rewarding to look at the gender distribution between text tattoos and other tattoos in the future and see whether it correlates with the findings of this and the previous studies.

My thesis embarked on a completely new field of study combining linguistics with interdisciplinary research on tattoos. As languages and their applications change, so do their functions and meanings. Here, English tattoos were seen as having an integral part in constructing individuals' identities and self-concepts in Finland. We

are living a tattoo renaissance, where tattoos are a commodity and thus obtainable for consumers alike. Nevertheless, due to their long and nuanced history, the negative stigma attached to the tattoos in general will probably persist in the near future as well. However, as more people continue to have tattoos and they become more visible and mundane along with the other body modification techniques such as piercings, even more people are able to enjoy and express themselves freely without contemptuous gazes.

Bibliography

- Armstrong, M. 1991. Career oriented women with tattoos. *Image-The Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 26, 215-220.
- Atkinson, M. 2003. *Tattooed: The Sociogenesis Of A Body Art*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Bell, S. 1999. Tattooed: A participant observer's exploration of meaning. *Journal of American Culture*, 22, 53-58.
- Braverman, S. (2012). One in five U. S. adults now has a tattoo. Harris Interactive. Retrieved on December 10, 2018 from <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/one-in-five-us-adults-now-has-a-tattoo-140123523.html>
- Buss L. & Hodges K. 2017. Marked: Tattoo as an Expression of Psyche. *Psychological Perspectives*, 60(1), 4-38.
- Caplan, J. 2000. *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History*. Princeton University Press.
- Colopelnic, N. 2011. THE TATTOOED BODY. *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai - Studia Europaea*, 2, 81-102.
- Demello, M. 2000, *Bodies of inscription*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Dickson, L. 2015. To Ink or Not to Ink: The Meaning of Tattoos among College Students. *College Student Journal*, 49(1), 106-120.
- Firmin, M., Tse, L., Foster, J. & Angelini, T. 2012. External dynamics influencing tattooing among college students: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of College Student Development*, 33, 76-90.
- Fisher, J. 2002. Tattooing the Body, Marking Culture. *Body & Society*, 8(4), 91–107.
- Fowler, F. 2009. Designing Questions to Be Good Measures. In *Survey Research Methods* (4th ed.), 4th ed. 86-113. *Applied Social Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009.

- Gilbert, S. 2000. *Tattoo history: A source book*. New York, NY: Juno Books.
- Goffman, E. 2009. *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Simon and Schuster.
- Goldstein, N. 2007. Tattoos defined. *Clinics in Dermatology*, 25(4), 417-420.
- Horne, J. 2007. Tattoos and Piercings: Attitudes, Behaviors, and Interpretations of College Students. *College Student Journal*, 41(4), 1011-1020.
- Kelly-Holmes, H. 2014. Linguistic fetish: The sociolinguistics of visual multilingualism. In D. Machin (Ed.), *Visual communication* (135–151). Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Kosut, M. 2000. Tattoo Narratives: The Intersection of the Body, Self-identity and Society. *Visual Sociology*, 15, 79–100.
- Kääntä et al. 2013. Learning English Through Social Interaction: The Case of Big Brother 2006, Finland. *Modern Language Journal*, 97(2), 340-359.
- Lane, D. 2014. Tat's All Folks: An Analysis of Tattoo Literature. *Sociology Compass*, 8(4), 398-410.
- Leppänen, S. 2007. Youth language in media contexts: Insights into the functions of English in Finland. *World Englishes*, 26(2), 149-169.
- Leppänen, S and Nikula T. 2007. Diverse Uses of English in Finnish Society: Discourse-Pragmatic Insights into Media, Educational and Business Contexts. *Multilingua: Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication*, 26(4), 333-380.
- Leppänen, S., Pitkänen-Huhta, A., Nikula, T., Kytölä, S., Törmäkangas, T., Nissinen, K., Kääntä, L., Räisänen, T., Laitinen, M., Pahta, P., Koskela, H., Lähdesmäki, S., and Jousmäki, H., 2011. National survey on the English language in Finland: Uses, meanings and attitudes. *Studies in Variation, Contacts and Change in English* Vol. 5, [online] Available at: <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/series/volumes/05/>

- Nguyen, J. 2010. Making Meanings, Meaning Identity: Hmong Adolescent Perceptions and Use of Language and Style as Identity Symbols. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 20(4), 849-868.
- Pennycook, A. 2017. Translanguaging and semiotic assemblages. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 14(3), 269-282.
- Peck, A. & Stroud, C. 2015. Skinscapes. *Linguistic Landscape*, 1(1–2), 133–151.
- Pitts, V. 2003. *In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Provenzo, E. 2011. *Multiliteracies : Beyond Text And The Written Word*. Charlotte, N.C.: Information Age Publishing.
- Roux et al. 2018. Playful female skinscapes: Body narrations of multilingual tattoos. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 1-17.
- Shohamy, E. and Gorter D. (eds.). 2009. *Linguistic landscape: Expanding the scenery*. New York: Routledge.
- Statistics Finland. 2017. Retrieved on 23 January 2019 from http://tilastokeskus.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_vaesto.html
- Stets, J. and Burke, P. 2000. Identity theory and social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63 (3): 224-237.
- Taavitsainen, I. 2003. English in Finland: Globalisation, language awareness and questions of identity. *English Today*, 19(4), 3-15.
- Tiggemann, M. and Golder, F. 2006. Tattooing: An Expression of Uniqueness in the Appearance Domain. *Body Image* 3, 309–315.
- Westinen, E. 2017. Rapping the ‘Better folk’: Ideological and scalar negotiations of past and present. *Language and Communication*, 52, 74-87.

Appendix A - Questionnaire

Kyselytutkimus englanninkielisistä tatuoinneista Suomessa / Questionnaire about English language tattoos in Finland

Kiltos osallistumisestasi Helsingin yliopiston englannin kielen ja kirjallisuuden graduutkimukseeni englanninkielisistä tatuoinneista Suomessa. Aineisto kerätään nimettömästi ja vain ja ainoastaan tutkimustarkoituksiin, eikä sitä luovuteta muualle eteenpäin. Kyseilylomakkeen tekeminen kestää n. 10 minuuttia. Voit vastata kysymyksiin suomeksi tai englanniksi. Kiltos ajastasi!
Thank you for taking part in my Master's thesis (University of Helsinki, Master's Programme in English Studies) research about English language tattoos in Finland. The data is collected anonymously and for the research purposes and will not be distributed further. The following questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You can answer in Finnish or in English. Thank you for your time!

TAUSTA / BACKGROUND

Minä vuonna olet syntynyt? / What is your year of birth?

Mikä on sukupuolesi? / What is your gender?

- ☐ mies / male
☐ nainen / female
☐ muu kuin mies tai nainen / other than male or female
☐ en halua sanoa / don't want to say

Mikä on äidinkieleni? / What is your mother tongue?

- ☐ suomi / Finnish
☐ ruotsi / Swedish
☐ englanti / English
☐ muu / other

Mikä on nykyinen ammattisi? / What is your current occupation?

Mikä on koulutustasosi? / What is your level of education?



Mikä on koulutustasosi? / What is your level of education?

- ☐ peruskoulu / comprehensive school
☐ lukio / upper secondary school
☐ ammattikoulu / vocational school
☐ ammattikorkeakoulu / university of applied sciences
☐ yliopisto / university
☐ muu / other

Asutko kaupungissa vai maaseudulla? / Do you live in a city or in a countryside?

- ☐ kaupungissa / in a city
☐ maaseudulla / in a countryside

Pidätkö itseäsi... / Do you consider yourself as...

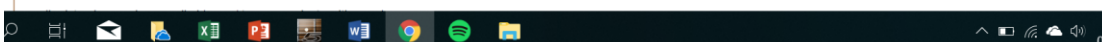
- ☐ yksikielisenä / monolingual
☐ kaksikielisenä / bilingual
☐ monikielisenä / multilingual

ENGLANNIN TAIDOT / ENGLISH SKILLS

Kuinka usein käytät englantia jokapäiväisessä elämässäsi? / How often do you use English in your everyday life?

- ☐ en yhtään / not at all
☐ harvoin / rarely
☐ about once a week / noin kerran viikossa
☐ useasti viikossa / several times a week
☐ joka päivä / every day

Mistä syystä käytät englantia eniten? / For which reason do you use English the most?



Mistä syystä käytät englantia eniten? / For which reason do you use English the most?—

☐ ihmisten kanssa kommunikoidessa / to communicate with people
☐ oppiakseni sitä paremmin / to learn it better
☐ koska se on hauskaa / for the fun of it
☐ tiedon hankkimiseen / to search for information
☐ työn tai opiskelun yhteydessä / for my work or studies
☐ kun ei ole muita vaihtoehtoja / when there are no alternatives

Kuinka tärkeänä koet englannin sinulle henkilökohtaisesti? / How important is English to you personally?—

☐ ei lainkaan tärkeä / not important at all
☐ ei kovin tärkeä / not very important
☐ jokseenkin tärkeä / moderately important
☐ todella tärkeä / very important

Kuinka kuvallist englanninkielen taitojasi? / How would you describe your English skills?—

☐ Tunnen osaavani englantia yhtä hyvin kuin äidinkielenpuhujia. / I feel that I know English as well as a speaker who uses it as their mother tongue.
☐ Tunnen osaavani englantia paremmin kuin suomalaiset keskimääräisesti. / I feel that I know English better than Finns on average.
☐ Tunnen osaavani englantia tarpeeksi hyvin. / I feel that I know English well enough.
☐ Olen ylpeä englanninkielen taitoistani. / I am proud of my English skills.
☐ Häpeän englanninkielen taitojani. / I am ashamed of my English skills.
☐ Haluan oppia enemmän englantia. / I want to learn more English.

Jos sinun täytyisi valita, käyttäisitkö mieluummin englantia vai suomea päivittäin? / If you had to choose, would you rather use English or Finnish on a daily basis?—

☐ suomea / Finnish
☐ englantia / English

TATUOINNIT / TATTOOS

TATUOINNIT / TATTOOS

Kuinka monella läheisellä ystävälläsi tai perheenjäsenelläsi tatuointeja? / How many of your close friends or family members have tattoos?—

☐ ei kenelläkään / none [jos vastasit tämän, ohita seuraava kysymys / if you answered this, skip the next question]
☐ 1
☐ 2-5
☐ useammalla / more

Mitä mieltä olet läheisten ystäväsi tai perheenjäsenesi tatuoinneista? / What do you think about the tattoos of your close friends or family members?

Kuinka monta tatuointia sinulla on? / How many tattoos do you have?—

☐ 1
☐ 2-5
☐ enemmän / more

Kuinka monta englanninkielistä sisältävää tatuointia sinulla on? / How many tattoos including English text do you have?—

☐ 1
☐ 2-5
☐ enemmän / more

Minkä ikäisenä otit ensimmäisen tatuointisi? / At what age did you take your first tattoo?

Kuinka kauan suunnitteleet tatuoinnin ottamista yleensä? / How long do you approximately plan about taking a tattoo in general? ?—

Kuinka kauan suunnitteleen suunnittelet tatuoinnin ottamista yleensä? / How long do you approximately plan about taking a tattoo in general? ?

☐ en lainkaan / not at all
☐ yli viikon / over a week
☐ yli kuukauden / over a month
☐ useita kuukausia / several months
☐ yli vuoden / over a year

Millaisia positiivisia kokemuksia sinulla on ollut tatuointisi vuoksi? Kuvalle yhtä. / What kinds of positive experiences have you had because of your tattoo(s)? Describe one.

Millaisia negatiivisia kokemuksia sinulla on ollut tatuointisi vuoksi? Kuvalle yhtä. / What kinds of negative experiences have you had because of your tattoo(s)? Describe one.

Piilotatko koskaan tatuointiasi/tatuointeja tarkoituksella? Miksi, miksi ei? / Do you ever hide your tattoo(s) on purpose? Why, why not?

Aiotko ottaa lisää tatuointeja tulevaisuudessa? Miksi, miksi ei? / Are you going to take more tattoos in the future? Why, why not?

Kuvalle yhtä englanninkielistä sisältävää tatuointia, jonka olet nähnyt jollakin muulla. Mitä mieltä oit siitä? / one tattoo that had English language in it, which you have seen someone else wear. How did you feel about it?

Jos sinun pitäisi valita, ottaisitko mieluummin seuraavan tatuointisi englanniksi vai suomeksi, miksi? / If you had to choose, would you rather take your next tattoo in English or in Finnish, why?

ENGLANNINKIELINEN TATUOINTI 1 / ENGLISH TATTOO 1

Huomoitthan, että seuraavat kysymykset koskevat vain tatuointiasi, joka sisältää englanninkielistä tekstiä.
Please note that the following questions only concern your tattoo which has English text in it.

Mitä englanninkielisessä tatuoinnissasi lukee? / What does it read in your English tattoo?

Onko englanninkielisen tekstin mukana kuva? Miksi, miksi ei? / Is the English text accompanied with a picture? Why, why not?

Kuinka paljon pidät tatuoinnistasi? / How much do you like the tattoo? (1 = en yhtään / not at all - 5 = todella paljon / very much)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5

Kuinka paljon välität siitä, mitä muut ajattelevat tatuoinnistasi? / How much do you care what others think about your tattoo? (1 = en yhtään / not at all - 5 = todella paljon / very much)

perheenjäsenet / family members ☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5

ystävät ja kollegat / friends and co-workers ☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5

työnantajat / employers ☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5

sinulle tuntemattomat ihmiset / strangers ☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5

Missä tatuointi sijaitsee? Miksi? / Where is the tattoo situated? Why?

Miksi päätit ottaa tatuoinnin? Mitä se merkitsee sinulle? / Why did you decide to get the tattoo? What does it mean to you?

Miksi otit tatuointisi englanniksi? / Why did you take your tattoo in English?

Kuinka paljon tatuointi sinulle merkitsee? / How much does the tattoo mean to you? (1 = ei mitään / nothing - 5 = todella paljon / very much)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5

Kuinka paljon pidät tatuoinnistasi? / How much do you like the tattoo? (1 = en yhtään / not at all - 5 = todella paljon / very much)

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4

Kuvalle yhtä positiivista kokemusta, joka liittyy englanninkieliseen tatuointisi. / Describe one positive experience you recall relating to your English language tattoo.

Kuvalle yhtä negatiivista kokemusta, joka liittyy englanninkieliseen tatuointisi. / Describe one negative experience you recall relating to your English language tattoo.

Piilotatko koskaan englanninkielistä tatuointiasi tarkoituksella? Miksi, miksi ei? / Do you ever hide your English language tattoo on purpose? Why, why not?

Oletko koskaan miettinyt poistattavasi tatuointisi? / Have you ever thought having the tattoo removed?

Missä otit tatuoinnin? / Where did you get the tattoo?

Onko tämä tatuointi lempitatuointisi? Miksi, miksi ei? / Is the tattoo your favorite one? Why, why not?

Minkä ikäinen olit, kun otit tatuoinnin? / Age when you took the tattoo?

Onko tatuoinnin merkitys muuttunut, siitä hetkestä kun otit sen? Jos on, niin millä tavalla? / Has the meaning of the tattoo changed since you took it? If so, how?

Oliko tämä tatuointi ensimmäisesi? / Was this tattoo your first one?

Kuinka usein katselet tatuointia? / How often do you look at the tattoo?

Kuinka kyseinen tatuointi on muuttanut sinua? / How has the tattoo changed you?

Appendix B – The list of the tattoos

Life's the shadows ...

Know your roots

Pätkä U2 sometimes you can't make it on your own

Affection

Love Each Day

Infinite dreams

Some people are like pennies, two faced and worthless

Where dead angels lie

En pelkää pahaa...

The Brightest Lights In The Darkest Night

Pinky

Peace

Just because my path is different doesn't mean I'm lost

If I fall Nothing is over

Against all odds

Keep the faith

Where there is love there is life

Be strong

Suomi Finland

Ohana means family and family means nobody left behind or forgotten

Remember who you are

Lyyrikoita

Inspired by life

Love. Family. Trust

I am enough

Walk the line

After rain there is always sunshine

I'm pretty but not beautiful. I sin, but I'm not devil. I'm good, but I'm not...

If you're going through he'll keep going

Take no shit

Loyal to no one, no one but you

Ei mahdu tähän

Nothing gold can stay

She slept with wolves without fear, for the wolves knew a lion was among them.

Koko teksti ei mahtunut tähän

Life is a bitch

Never run faster than your guardian angel can fly

What a time to be alive

No matter how you feel, get up, dress up, show up and never give up

Stay true

Forever in heart

King

Always

When i die, bury me face down so the whole world can kiss my ass.
 Everything has a bright and a dark side, and neither can exist without the other
 But never hold me down
 Breathe
 True lovestory never end's
 You dont need wings to fly
 Still Alive
 MADNESS as you know, is like GRAVITY, all it takes is a LITTLE PUSH
 Never too loud
 Live free
 Not all heroes wear capes
 Se on legendaarisen näyttelijän todella käytetty sanonta ja kertoo hänestä ihmis
 This might be the day we die
 Choose the impossible.
 Aint getting any younger
 She believed she could so she did.
 angel's wings carry me away
 thank you
 If you go, I wanna go with you
 Taming me is like taming the seven seas
 Let go of the past. Life is now. Believe in the future.
 Eternity love
 Expecto patronum
 No regrets just dreams
 What you give is what you get
 Take no shit
 Family
 We used to drink ourselves to the ground. Because of you i lose my mind
 Truth Beauty Freedom Love
 Knocking on heavens door
 Never let you down
 When the world says give up, hope whispers try one more time
 My everything
 A single rose can be my garden
 Reach For The Sky
 It's a liberty walk
 Walking where the dead ships dwell
 Only the laws of physics can judge me.
 It's all about the attitude.
 Hardcore
 Never forget yesterday, but always live for today, you never know what tomorrow
 Celebrate the life (ja lapsen nimi)
 Stilo I rise
 no angel born in hell
 Dogs never lie about love
 gratitude
 Napalm
 Heaven doesn't seem far away

Siinä on lause, ajatelma. Ei mahdu tähän.

So close no matter how far

We all make choices but in the end our choices make us

If you don't go when you want to go. When you do go, you'll find you're gone

It may be stormy now but it won't rain forever

All you need is the right kind of love

You are the one

Se on niin pitkä että ei mahdu tähän.

Dance like nobody is watching

This might be our best 24 hours.

Big sister

so one day you could breathe

Im still here

Take me down to the paradise city

Life is ours we live it our way

En omista enkkukielistä tattoa

Forever together, never apart. Maybe in distance, but never in heart.

Create your own path

Only Hope

Warr;or

without pain, tell me what's the point in glory

When a loved one becomes a memory that memory becomes a treasure

The brightest Diamonds are created under high pressure

Forgive

Destiny

Once upon a time, Happily ever after

Times are hard for dreamers

Their first breath took mine away

Drop Dead Cynical

Never give up

Always the hard way

What ever tomorrow brings Ill be there with open arms and open eyes

Quicksilver

For ever

We are the beautiful ones

Viking family ja vain jumala voi tuomita minut

The prettiest thing you can wear is a smile

Live love

Cupid's victim

Kissed by fire

love

Lucky

Street Dog

We're all mad here

Mercy

Eräs rukous.

Never Stop Believing - Miracles Happen

Mother. Most important person to me

"Paradise"

Minulle tärkeä asia

Food is my passion

Stop! Life is now, it's all for you. Turn from the hate. Turn from the smoke.

The stories we love best do live in us forever

No sacrifice, no victory

We only have one life to live and my life is worth living

Prepare for the future.

Wild child

The Phantom of the Opera

Boys Boys Boys

EWMN

Happyhardcore

sink or swim

A fire inside

Liian pitkä ei mahdu kenttään. Kuvastaa elämänsäennetta

Lets do what we love and do a lot of it

Love

Miles to go, before I sleep

Death Before Dark-Side

Never give in

together forever

There is some good in this world and its worth fighting for

Enjoy it.

One more time one night together

Love sick

We are the youth gone wild

Believe

Done with broken hearts

A man chooses. A slave obeys.

My ruin

Hungry heart

Fight like a girl

Do or do not, there is no try.

Raise your fist and say we're all the same
